



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

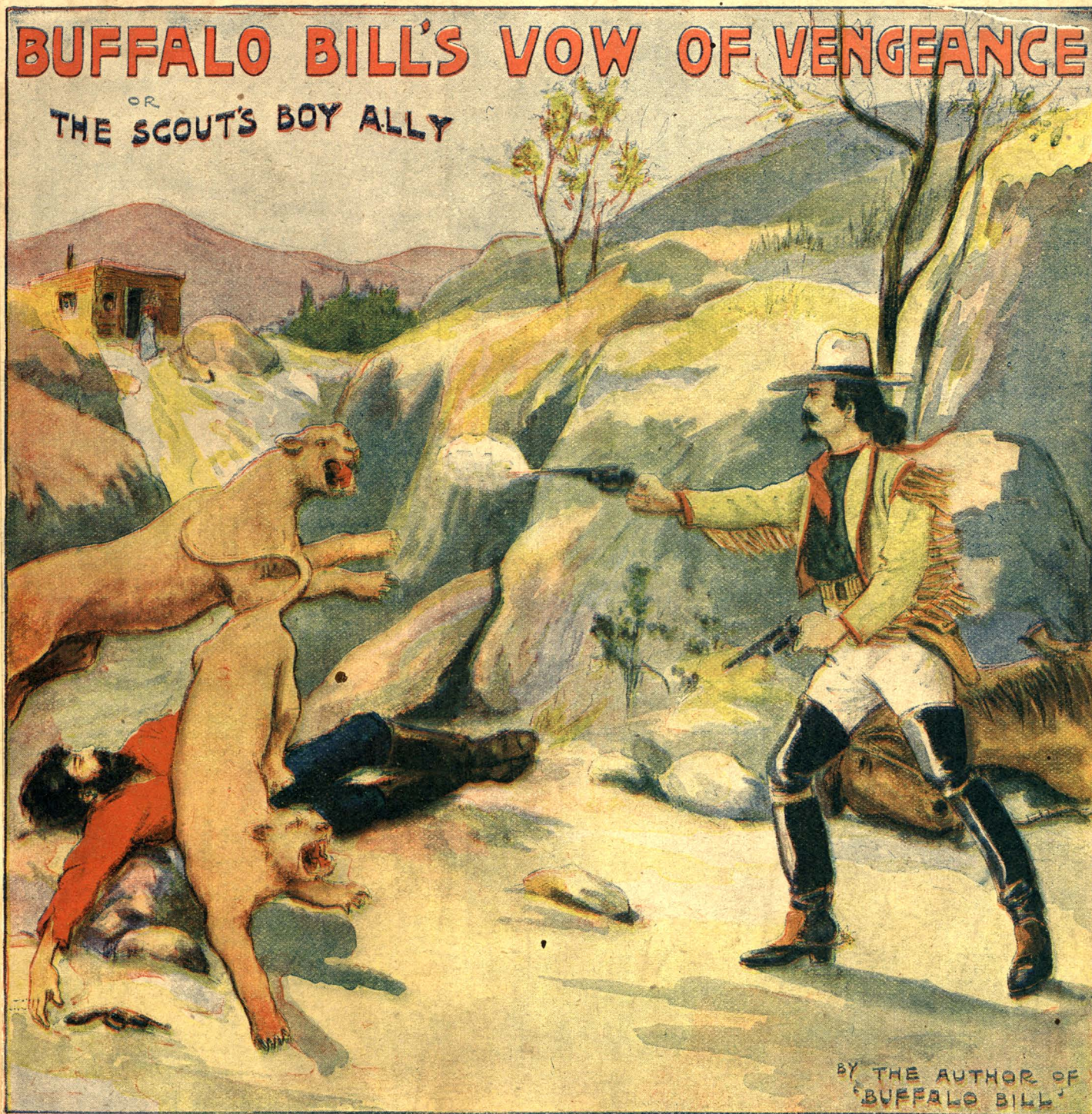
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No. 53.

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S VOW OF VENGEANCE

OR
THE SCOUT'S BOY ALLY



BY THE AUTHOR OF
'BUFFALO BILL'

THE TWO HUGE CATAMOUNTS CAME AT BUFFALO BILL, AND IT WAS WELL FOR HIM THAT HIS AIM WAS DEADLY.



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NEW YORK, May 17, 1902.

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BUFFALO BILL'S VOW OF VENGEANCE;

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By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

BUFFALO BILL'S VOW.

When Buffalo Bill, chief of scouts at Fort Blank, made a vow of vengeance, all who knew him felt certain that he would keep it.

All knew, too, that he had come to utter a revengeful oath against the Trail Raiders, for their chief had very nearly cost the great scout his life—in fact, he had caused him to have a very narrow escape from death by hanging, for, as an honored scout at Fort Blank, a man respected, if not liked, he had become second in command of the men in buckskin at the military post, and his charges against Buffalo Bill, backed by circumstantial evidence, had very nearly done the fatal act for William F. Cody.

But Buffalo Bill had not only proven Scout Monte a traitor and a plotter, but that he was in reality a spy of the outlaw band known as the Trail Raiders, and had brought him to justice.

In this good work the scout had been aided by Captain Cecil Lorne, an officer who was a warm friend of Cody's; Keno, one of his scouts, and Ben Hurst, a youth who was known as the Brave Boy in Buckskin, and whom Buffalo Bill had found on the prairie one night, alone with his dead, for the Trail Raiders had swooped down on the camp that night and wiped out his parents, brother and servants, and left the fate of his sister Lou unknown.

The bodies of the others the boy and the scout had found, but the sister's remains could not be discovered—in fact, no trace of her, dead or alive.

Ben, then fifteen, was away from the camp searching for his pony, and so missed the massacre.

"I shall not rest with the execution of that man, Monte, Colonel Barry," Cody had said, "for his band must be wiped out, and I believe that they know something about that poor boy's sister, as I cannot believe that she is dead."

"Dead or alive, however, I must and shall know; I mean it, while I solemnly vow, sir, that I will hunt down the Trail Raiders to their just doom."

Thus had Buffalo Bill registered his vow of vengeance, and Colonel Barry knew that it would be kept.

What had drawn Buffalo Bill to the fatal camp was hearing the notes of a bugle plaintively echoing upon the prairie and filling the night with melody.

It was the boy, Ben Hurst, relieving his pent-up feeling by playing upon his silver bugle, and few could play as he did.

Colonel Barry, when Cody took the boy to the fort, gladly made him a bugler, and in several battles the brave youth had shown himself a hero.

He fairly idolized Buffalo Bill, and was known as Cody's Boy Pard, Buffalo Bill's Boy Ally, and the Boy Bravo in Buckskin, for he always wore a buckskin suit.

He was loved by all, but his hero and boon companion was the great scout.

When, therefore, Buffalo Bill had told him that he would yet find out the fate of his sister, he had faith that he would do so.

The charge which Monte had pressed so hard against Buffalo Bill had been made from the dying lips of Bill Bronze, also a traitor scout, as was later proven, who, in the pay of his chief, had ambushed the great scout at Padre's Rock to kill him, but had been slain by the man whose life he sought to take.

Riding on, believing Bill Bronze dead, Buffalo Bill later learned that Monte had appeared upon the scene, found his companion in guilt mortally wounded, and prevailed upon him to charge Buffalo Bill with shooting him down in cold blood.

For payment for this Monte was to see that the daughter of Bill Bronze, whose real name was Dallas, was to receive the blood money, the poor girl not knowing her father to be other than the rancher he represented himself to be.

For the money, to be given to his daughter, Lulu Dallas, then at a boarding school, the dying man had uttered false testimony against Cody before witnesses.

"I will see to it that the girl gets the money her guilty father said she should have," said Buffalo Bill, earnestly, and he meant it.

So matters stood at Fort Blank a month after the execution of Monte, the Trail Raiders' spy, and,

though matters had settled down in seeming quiet, Buffalo Bill was on the alert, for he had not forgotten his promise, nor his vow.

CHAPTER II.

A GIRL'S PLEDGE.

A horsewoman was cantering slowly over the prairie, on the border of the ranch settlements, about one hundred miles to the southwest of Fort Blank.

She was a striking-looking girl, of about seventeen, and in the belt around her riding-habit she carried a revolver, while to the saddle-horn hung a shotgun.

"Come, Bird," she said, addressing her horse; "we will go to the spring in the timber yonder, and then go home, for we are all of fifteen miles away, and I am always on the lookout for trouble in this wild land, though I can take care of myself now, I think, for Mr. Brent says I am no slouch of a girl, and that is a compliment, I believe—ah! there is a chance for a shot."

Quick as a flash she drew her revolver and fired at a bird on the wing, and dropped it, while a second shot brought down its mate, startled from the grass on ahead.

"Was that not well done?" she said, preparing to reload as she rode along.

But there was something out of order with the weapon, some screw loose, and, with an impatient exclamation, she thrust it back into its holster, and rode on at a canter toward the spring she spoke of, and which she knew was in the shelter of the timber ahead.

The clump of trees was a favorite camping-place for trains, scouts and soldiers on the march, for there was good water in plenty, the grass grew rich upon the surrounding prairie, and then there was plenty of wood for the cheerful campfires.

Utterly fearless, she cared little for the wild characters that infested the region, for, if the speed of her pony failed her, she had her revolver left, she always said, when warned of her danger.

Frequently before she had halted at the spring for a drink of water for herself and pony, and now she rode directly for the spring, where the crystal water bubbled up, cool and inviting.

"Don't be greedy, Bird, but wait until I have ha-

a drink, for you muddy the water playing in it," she said, restraining her pony, and springing from the saddle.

An old tin cup hung by the spring, and, taking it, she bent over to fill it, when her arms were seized with a grasp she could not shake off, and, looking over her shoulder, she saw a fierce face peering into her own.

"Unhand me! how dare you seize me thus!" she cried, in stern tones, trying to free her arms from his grasp.

"Now, jist be still, leetle gal, and yer won't git hurted, fer I don't mean yer no harm, fer I hes jist tuk yer in fer tin."

"I have little money with me," said the maiden, knowing what he meant by tin.

"What I have, you can take and let me go."

"No; I hain't a durned fool."

"What do you mean?"

"I means thet I hes had my eye on yer fer some time, fer yer folks is rich, and they'll pay ter git yer back."

"You are mistaken; I am no kindred to the Brents, with whom I dwell."

"Waal, yer is in thar keer, an' I guesses they'll pay ter git yer back."

"Not one dollar will they pay."

"Waal, we'll see, fer yer goes with me, anyhow."

In vain she tried to free herself, for the man possessed giant strength, and said:

"'Tain't no use kickin' against it, leetle gal, fer yer hes ter go. Ef yer goes quiet, all are serene, an' ef yer don't, then I'll tie yer, bind up thet pretty rosebud mouth ter keep yer from yellin', an' take yer anyhow. What does yer say?"

"I will give you my word to meet you here to-morrow with your price, if you will let me go."

"Nary, fer yer mought hev comp'ny."

"No; I will come alone."

"Yer mought hev others ter foller."

"I will not, for I will not speak of my intention, and I will bring what I have of my own money."

"How much are that?"

"I have five hundred dollars."

"Waal, I wants more."

"I have no more."

"Yer has jewelry, fer thar is a watch and chain, an' some ear-bobs, while I guesses yer gloves hides some rings!"

"Well, I will leave my watch and chain with you as security, and return to-morrow with the five hundred."

"Say yer'll fetch ther money, an' give me ther trinkets, lettin' me have ther timer now, an' yer kin go."

"But yer hes ter promise 'pon yer sacred word yer'll be here."

"I will be here, I promise vou."

"At what time?"

"At about this time."

"No, make it a leetle later, so thet I kin hev darkness ter skip in, ef thar were ter be a mistake."

"Very well."

"And yer'll come alone?"

"Yes."

"An' yer won't give it away thet yer is comin' ter meet me?"

"No."

"That are good, an' I knows yer'll keep yer word."

"Now, yer kin go as soon as yer gives me ther timer."

He released her as he spoke, and, taking off the watch and chain, she handed it to him.

Then she very calmly took a drink of water, and allowed her pony to do likewise.

"Waal, yer is a cool one," said the robber, admiringly.

She merely smiled, sprung into her saddle, refusing his proffered assistance, and sallied forth out of the timber.

CHAPTER III.

THE BITER BITTEN.

"Waal, ef thet gal do keep her word, she'll be ther gamest piece o' calico I ever seen in my lifetime."

The speaker was the ruffian who had the evening before seized the maiden in the timber, and compromised by taking her word to bring him five hundred dollars, along with her jewels, for her freedom.

To escape from his clutches, she had given him the promise, and with the intention of keeping it.

On his part the robber had been willing for the compromise, as he was then a hunted man, and had no place to take his fair prisoner while he was waiting for ransom.

His horse stood back in the timber, saddled and

bridled, ready for a race should it be necessary, and his rifle hung at his saddle-horn.

The animal was a splendid one, and, in fact, his speed and bottom had saved his master from being suspended from a tree on several occasions.

The man was clad in buckskin, wore a belt of arms, carrying a knife and four revolvers, and his face was repulsive in the extreme.

Bad Ben was the name he was known by, and he deserved it, for he was one of the most wicked rascals that haunted the prairie.

"With ther money," he continued, keeping his eyes on the distant trail, "I will dust out o' this, fer 'tain't healthy fer a man in a community whar they offers a thousand dollars fer him, dead or alive.

"I'll strike fer New Mexico, and I guesses that part o' ther kentry will jist soot me.

"Ef ther gal comes, tho'?" and he peered anxiously into the distance in search for the hoped-for maiden.

"Ef I had er place ter take her, and some one ter negotiate fer me, I'd hold her fer ransom, es them Brents w'u'd pay a big sum fer her, being as she is left in their charge.

"But I might git a rope cravat while waitin', so I'll jist sail off with what I kin git.

"Ah! thar comes some one."

He looked earnestly at the person who had caught his eye, and then continued:

"Yas, I knows thet pretty hat o' hern.

"It are ther leetle gal, an' she are alone."

He fairly capered with delight at this discovery, and then kept his eye upon the coming horsewoman.

Her pony was coming on at a long canter, and she sat upright in the saddle, her face pale, yet fearless.

Turning from the direct trail, she came on toward the timber, bringing her pony down to a walk as she neared the spot of her meeting with the desperado.

"Waal, leetle gal, yer is gamer than a hungry wolf!" cried Bad Ben, as she rode into the timber and halted near the spring.

"And you are as vicious as a hungry wolf.

"But I do not fear you, and have come to keep my promise," was the bold reply.

"Did yer keep yer promise, tho'?"

"Am I not here?"

"Yas."

"Then why ask if I kept my promise?"

"Did yer bring ther money?"

"I did."

"An' yer gold trinkets?"

"You see that I wear my earrings, you have my watch and chain, and, see, here are my rings."

She drew off her gloves as she spoke, revealing two very pretty little hands, and upon several of her fingers were rings of considerable value.

"Waal, yer is a honey, an' ef yer is engaged to sum fine feller, I'll leave yer the engagement ring."

"No; I am not engaged."

"Will be soon, I guesses, fer yer hain't ther kind o' a gal that ther fellers will let alone."

The girl laughed lightly, and made no reply, while the desperado said:

"Waal, chuck off ther rings, an' ther ear-bobs, fer I don't want yer ter lose no time."

"Take the gold first."

"Whar is it?"

"In the saddle pocket."

The fellow stepped to the side of her horse and unfastened the flap of her saddle-pocket, and saw within a buckskin bag, which was filled with gold.

"Thar is five hundred dollars thar?"

"Count them yourself, and see."

The man placed his hand upon the bag to take it out, but found that it was caught in some way, so used both hands.

As he did so a revolver muzzle was thrust squarely into one eye, while the silvery voice of the maiden said firmly:

"Bad Ben, I want you! Up with your hands, or I pull trigger!"

"Wolves an' coyotes! Gal, what does yer mean?"

"Just what I say, you villain! Up with your hands, or you die!"

He glanced up into her face, and saw that she meant every word that she uttered, and promptly he raised his hands above his head.

"Clasp your hands together!" was the next order. Sullenly the desperado obeyed.

With her disengaged hand she took a lariat, which hung at her saddle-horn, and slipped the noose over his arms and elbows, drawing them tightly together.

Then coil after coil was wound round his wrists and arms until the man was a prisoner and wholly at her mercy.

"Gal, this are a joke? Yer don't meant thet yer are in yarnest?"

"I do; in dead earnest, as you shall see."

"Yer hes broke yer word ter me."

"I have not."

"Yer said yer w'u'd come an' give me ther money an' ther trinkets, 'cause I was so good an' let you go."

"I said no such thing."

"Them lips is too purty ter tell lies."

The maiden again broke out into a silvery laugh, but said:

"I did not tell a lie. I told you I would meet you here, and bring the money you demanded, along with my jewelry. I have done so, and hence have kept my word. But I said nothing about quietly letting you rob me, and I did not then intend to submit to it in silence. My pistol was out of order yesterday, or I would have turned on you then; but now I have you safe."

"What does yer intend ter do with me?"

"Give you up to the officers of the law."

"They'll hang me."

"Doubtless. You deserve it."

"I never did anybody no harm."

"Oh, I know you, for I took your picture mentally yesterday, and, describing you, found out just who you are."

"An' who are I?"

"Bad Ben, a Trail Raider."

"Lordy! yer hes got me down fine, but yer hain't got ther heart ter see them hang me."

"No, for I shall not go to the hanging; but, knowing of your many red deeds, I would do wrong were I to release you."

"Were you a common robber, I would disarm you and let you go, but now you will have to suffer the penalty of your crimes."

"Come, move, and go on foot, for I will lead your horse, as I fear to trust you on his back."

"I'll not stir one step, gal."

"You must."

"I says I won't."

"Do you wish me to kill you?"

"Yas, fer it are better ter die now from a bullet than to go an' get my neck stretched," was the dogged reply.

The maiden was in a quandary, for what to do she did not know.

To shoot the man, she would not think of such a thing, unless he attempted to attack her or to escape.

She knew well that he deserved death for his many crimes, and she also knew that he would soon be disposed of if she took him to the settlement.

She would not shrink from her duty, though, and yet how was she to get him there?

"You will not go, you say?" she suddenly asked, as a thought flashed through her mind.

"Not a step."

"We shall see, then."

She made a noose in the end of the lariat she held, and threw it about his body.

Then she made it fast to the saddle-horn, and said:

"Come, Bird, you will have to drag this gentleman, and I will ride his horse."

She sprang from her saddle as she spoke, and, approaching the splendid animal of the desperado, pulled up the lariat-stake and leaped into the saddle.

"Come, Bird," she called out to her horse, and the animal, well-trained and obedient, walked toward her.

From side to side Bad Ben bounded, but the mustang moved on after its pretty mistress, pulling the ruffian along, in spite of his fierce struggles, while the maiden, pistol in hand, rode on ahead, a beautiful guard over a particularly ugly human wretch.

CHAPTER IV.

BUFFALO BILL, THE SCOUT.

The violent struggles of the desperado to free himself and to hang back, could not last long, as the maiden captor of the ruffian well knew.

But she was unprepared to see him, as his strength failed, suddenly throw himself at full length upon the prairie and allow the pony to drag him.

"If I allow my heart to soften toward him, he will give me more trouble, so I'll let Bird drag him a while, and he'll soon get tired of it," she said to herself.

But just then she saw a horseman coming toward her at a rapid gallop.

Quickly she halted, calling to her pony to do the same, while she raised the rifle of the prisoner, which was hanging at the saddle-horn, not knowing but that she might have to face a foe.

The appearance of the horseman was assuring, however.

He was mounted upon a jet-black steed that came

on at a swinging lope, with arched neck and graceful carriage that seemed to mind neither the weight he bore nor the distance he had traveled.

His saddle and bridle were of Mexican make, and were very rich in workmanship, being spangled with silver.

The rider was dressed in buckskin, and wore his leggings stuck in high and handsome cavalry boots, the heels of which were armed with massive spurs.

About his waist, and half-hidden by his short jacket, was a sash, in which were a pair of revolvers and a knife, and at his back hung a repeating rifle, and to the saddle-horn a lariat.

The face of the horseman was certainly very fascinating, darkly bronzed in complexion, with large eyes, most expressive, and a regularity of features that was perfect.

His hair fell in clusters upon his broad shoulders, gauntlet gloves covered his hands, and a broad-brimmed sombrero, embroidered with gold, sat jauntily upon his head.

Raising his sombrero as he approached, he gazed with some surprise at the maiden and her prisoner, and said, politely and in a rich voice:

"Can I aid you, miss? for you have a very unruly customer there."

"Thank you, señor; I shall esteem it a favor, as I confess he is more than I can manage."

"It does not look so, for he appears to be your prisoner."

"Yes; I captured him a while ago," and the maiden laughingly told the story of her adventure of the day before, and her determination to capture the wretch.

"Ah! you say he is known as Bad Ben?"

"Yes, señor."

"I recognize him, now that I get a look at his ugly face."

"Yas, an' I knows yer, too, Buffalo Bill, ther scout," growled the prisoner.

"Then yon know that you will have to obey, for I will stand no trifling."

"Now, miss, what are your orders?"

"I wish the man to get up and go with me to the settlement."

"He will do it, of course."

"In corse, I won't," was the sullen reply.

"Permit me to ask you to ride your horse, and I will place him upon his."

The maiden sprung to the ground, and held the rein of the desperado's horse, while the handsome man whom Bad Ben had called Buffalo Bill raised that worthy in his strong arms as though he had been a child, and threw him across the saddle.

A lariat then bound him firmly to the saddle, and after giving the bridle-rein of the animal to the maiden, he said, pleasantly:

"There is your prisoner, miss, and I think you will have no more trouble with him."

"I thank you, sir," and the young girl vaulted into her saddle, while the scout also mounted and rode by her side on toward the settlement.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCOUT'S DAUGHTER.

The sun was fast setting when the maiden, her prisoner and her escort, Buffalo Bill, rode into the settlement.

Her coming created great excitement, for she was known to many as a dashing, daring girl, who preferred to ride over the prairies to moping in the hacienda where she lived.

Bad Ben, the desperado, was also known, and many had been the efforts made to capture him, especially since some deadly work of which he had lately been guilty.

A reward for his body, dead or alive, had been offered, and this had stimulated a number of brave men to go on the hunt for him.

Now he had been captured by a girl, and all listened breathlessly while she sat upon her horse telling her story to the officers of the law.

"You are entitled to the reward, miss," said the marshal.

"I do not care for the reward, and, in fact, would not accept it, so leave it in your hand to give to the needy," was the answer of the maiden.

"You are most generous, but you will, at least, accept the horse of Bad Ben, for he is a superb animal," urged the marshal.

"Thank you, I will take the horse, and if you will unsaddle him I will take him to my home."

"Permit me to do that much for you," said the scout, Buffalo Bill, and he seized the bridle-rein of the desperado's horse and rode off with the maiden, amid wild cries to hang the prisoner.

"They will give him no trial, I fear," said the young

girl, addressing the scout, as the two rode away together, and the yells of the infuriated crowd grew wilder and wilder.

"I do not think that he deserves trial—see! they have seized him by force from the marshal, and are going to hang him."

"Oh, this is terrible!

"Come, let us ride on and get beyond hearing of their voices."

She urged the pony into a rapid run as she spoke, and the scout kept close to her side, the desperado's horse running along without any trouble, as though glad of the change of owners.

"My home is there, and, after your kindness to me, I must ask you in, and Mr. Brent will welcome you. I reside in his family," and she pointed to a handsome *hacienda* far in the distance.

"No, thank you, for I have a duty to perform which admits of no delay.

"But another time I hope to have the honor of meeting you."

"I will be glad to see you whenever you can call."

"Perhaps you can tell me of the one I seek. She is at the convent, I believe."

"Yes, if you seek any one there, I can tell you of her, for only a few months ago I left the convent, having completed my studies, and Mr. Brent, an old friend of my father's, made me a member of his family.

"What is the name, please, of the young lady you would find?"

"Lulu Dallas."

"Indeed! Then you need go no further to find her, for I am Lulu Dallas."

"You surprise me, and give me pleasure, too, for I came hither to seek you."

"Ah, sir; you speak in such a serious tone I fear you bring me ill tidings.

"Speak, I implore you! Do you come from my father?"

"I do, lady—come on his account," was the response.

"Has harm befallen him?" and, remaining on her horse, she gazed into the face of the man before her with earnest entreaty.

"I am the bearer of sad tidings for you."

"Speak! what of my father, for he is all I have in the world to hear ill-tidings from?"

"Your father is dead."

"Dead! Oh, Mary Mother! have mercy upon me!"

As the prayer burst from the white lips, the beautiful head was bent forward and rested in the hands, while the poor girl burst into tears.

The scout made no effort to check her grief, but sat in silence, gazing upon her.

After a few moments she raised her head, and said, earnestly:

"Ah, sir, do not think me a child not to control myself; but I have gone each afternoon for a week to meet my father, whom I expected about this time.

"Long years ago, when my poor mother died, he placed me in the *hacienda* here, and twice each year he has visited me, and a dear, generous father he has been to me.

"Now you tell me that he is dead, and that I must look for him no more."

"Yes; your father met his death at the hands of a foe, I may say."

"Killed?" gasped the young girl.

"Yes; he was shot down while he was engaged in his duties as a scout at the fort."

"His duties as a scout?"

"Yes, miss."

"Is there not some mistake?"

"None."

"My father was a ranchero."

"Your father was William Dallas, was he not?"

"Such was his name."

"He was an American?"

"Yes."

"And married your mother in Mexico, for she was the daughter of a Mexican don?"

"Yes, señor."

"Then there is no mistake, for your father was not a ranchero, but a scout at Fort Blank, and there he was known as Bill Bronze."

"Indeed! Why, señor, my father led me to believe that he had a small cattle ranch long miles from here."

"Perhaps he did so, miss, to keep you from anxiety, knowing that you would fear for him, leading the dangerous life of a scout."

"Perhaps so, señor," said Lulu Dallas, in a dazed kind of a way.

"Such was doubtless the case, but a scout he certainly was, and he served under me at Fort Blank, where I am chief of scouts."

"Dying, he left his money for you, and I have come to turn over to you this package of bills, which contains something over three thousand dollars, as you will see by counting the money."

"Señor, there is some strange mystery in all that you tell me."

"Not in the least, miss."

"Your father was a scout, and the money which he had saved up he sends you here."

"It is all that he had, and I will ask you to let me go with you to the *hacienda* and receive from you a receipt for it."

"Certainly; but, oh! what a bitter blow you have given me!"

She moved on once more toward her home, and the scout entered with her and told again to the inmates of the *hacienda* the story which he had made known to the maiden.

"The señor speaks the truth, Lulu, your father was a scout, but for some reason wished the secret kept from you, and I never told you that he was not a *ranchero*, as he pretended to be," said Mr. Brent.

"I cannot understand it all," said Lulu.

"Well, my poor child, do not worry about it and remember that I am now to be your father," said the kind-hearted *ranchero*, and then he begged the scout to become his guest.

But Buffalo Bill declined, saying that he was forced to return with all haste to the fort, and receiving from Lulu a receipt for the money paid her, he departed from the *hacienda* and rode back on his trail.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT BUFFALO BILL OVERHEARD.

"That was a very cruel ordeal for me, the cruellest of my whole life, to have to go to that girl, whose father I had killed, and give to her the money left to her by my unworthy friend, Bill Bronze," remarked Buffalo Bill as he rode along the trail after his visit to the Brent ranch, where he had taken Lulu Dallas.

Continuing to muse, the scout went on:

"I do not believe that the colonel considered, when he asked me to find the girl and hand over to her the money, that I had killed her father, but merely concluded that I was the best one to get safely through the country with it."

"Well, it is over with, and I do not wish another duty like it, for, though I killed Bill Bronze and did it

because he fired upon me from ambush, yet it was death by my hands all the same, and well do I know that most of the money paid to the girl was paid to Bronze as a fee to kill me; but that she does not know, thank God, and she must not know that her father was an outlaw and a spy in the fort."

"Fortunately, the girl has a good home with Mr. Brent—but who would suspect her of being the daughter of Bill Bronze?"

"Well, I wish her only happiness, and am mighty glad to have served her."

"But now I'll look up a camp for the night, for I could not bear to stay under the same roof with the daughter of Bill Bronze."

"As my time is not limited, I'll scout around and try to get a few pointers on the Trail Raiders, and once more go over the ground where the Hurst train was attacked, for I cannot believe my Boy Pard's sister was killed, or wandered off to die on that fateful night, but rather that she was carried off a captive by the Trail Raiders, and held for ransom."

"Had she escaped from the camp, and thus missed capture, she would have been guided back by the fire, and there have been found by Boy Ben when he returned, and more, have heard his bugle, for I heard the notes miles away over the prairie, and thus found him."

"Well, I have had a good supper, so will seek my blankets for sleep," and the scout rode into a clump of timber, staked his horse out, found a good resting-place, and was soon fast asleep.

He was awakened soon after by hoof falls, and was instantly upon his guard, for he had to dread both Indians and outlaws.

Like phantoms two horsemen appeared and halted near him, one calling out:

"Here's a good camping-place, Dark, and I'm tired out."

"So is I, Boss; so here we sleeps," was the answer in a negro's voice.

The men had a pack animal, and the three horses were staked out by the white man, while the negro built a fire, and it revealed both distinctly.

Buffalo Bill crouched in the thicket watching them, and ready to act if they should discover him or his horse.

They first built a fire and began to cook supper, after which they wrapped their blankets about them, and went to sleep.

But Buffalo Bill had heard all that they had said, and it decided him upon his plan of action.

One thing that particularly had interested him was overhearing the negro say:

"Now, Monte has been done fer by de folks at de fort, does yer think de boss is gwine ter send more spies there, Boss, fer Bill Bronze were kilt by Buf'ler Bill, too, an' hit hain't no pleasant job?"

"I did hear old Catamount Kit say ther chief were goin' ter send you, Dark."

"Ole Catamount Kit are a liar, fer dis nigger don't go dar."

"No, sah, I'm willin' ter scout 'round wid de gang, an' ter watch de gal up by de hut in de mountings, but I hain't goin' ter no fort—no, sah, not dis nigger chile."

The white man laughed and said:

"Well, we got ter ther settlement all right, an' got ther provisions needed at ther hut, an' we hes got ter report to ther cap'n thet Bad Ben was captured by a gal, who tarned him over ter ther cowboys, an' they hanged him, so another man hes got ter be sent ter spy in his place."

"Yes, sah; an' we learnt that Buf'ler Bill was dar in de settlement, an' helped ther gal out in her capter ' Bad Ben; den he went back to de fort."

"Yas, so Bad Ben's blood is another one on Buf'ler Bill's head, an' I tells yer, Dark, he hes got ter be done fer afore we hes any rest in this kentry; but which trail does we take from here, fer we don't want ter run upon ther scout?"

"Fore de Lawd, we doesn't, so I says go 'round de long way by Red Rock, an' camp dar ter-morrer night."

"We'll do it."

All this did Buffalo Bill overhear, and it was enough to decide him upon his plan of action.

"I'll slip out of this and see what trail they take in the morning."

"They are Trail Raiders and they live at a hut in the mountains, and there is a girl captive there."

"They have been to the settlement after provisions, and they spoke of a man I have heard of—old Catamount Kit."

"I must get better acquainted with these fellows," and when all was quiet in the camp, Buffalo Bill slipped silently away, led his horse out upon the prairie, and then man and beast lay flat down upon the grass.

CHAPTER VII.

BROUGHT TO TERMS.

"Boss, I doesn't feel just easy campin' here, so I says, says I, we better had uppen and git out ter de hut ter-night."

So said Dark, the negro, whom Buffalo Bill had seen the night before come into camp with his white companion and the heavily-laden pack horse.

"I guess yer are right, Dark, fer scouts and sodgers from Fort Blank comes often ter Red Rock, so we won't stay long."

The two men drew rein near the spring, unsaddled their horses, and built a fire to get supper, which they had ready just as night came on.

"Hands up, there!"

"Oh, Lordy! we is dead niggers!" cried the negro, at the stern command from over Red Rock, while the white man made a bound to escape in the darkness.

"Halt! I will kill you if you don't!" cried the voice, and, as the man was disappearing out of the circle of firelight there came a shot.

Down dropped the white man, while the negro called out:

"I is halted, sah! Don' shoot!"

"Hands up!"

Up went the hands, and the next instant a form leaped over the rock and revolver in hand appeared before the frightened negro, who cried in awe:

"Massa Buf'ler Bill, de scout!"

"Yes, I am Buffalo Bill—and do you see that dead friend of yours over there?"

"Is he dead, sah?"

"He is."

"Lordy! hain't I glad I didn't skip!"

"It may have been better for you had you done so, for I am going to hang you."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, Massa Buf'ler Bill, what has I did?"

"You are a Trail Raider."

"Lawd sabe me, I is a goner fo' sartin."

"You are, if you don't do as I tell you."

"I'll do it, sah."

Buffalo Bill took the negro's lariat and quickly bound him.

Then he went over to the silent form lying sixty feet away.

The man was dead.

"Well, Dark——"

"You knows me, sah?"

"Yes; I know more than you think I do, for you live up at the hut of Catamount Kit in the mountains, and are one of the guards who watch a girl prisoner your chief has there, and you and Boss are just back from Rancher's Settlement, where you went to get provisions and see Bad Ben, the spy of the Raiders at that place."

"You knows it all, Massa Bill."

"Now, tell me who the girl is at the hut."

"What am hit wuth ter me?"

"Nothing, for I know, as you captured her from the Hurst train, and have kept her in hiding until your chief could get ransom money for her."

"Dere is no need yer askin' me nothin', sah, but I guesses yer wants ter find de mountings, an' I kin trade wid you, sah."

"Your horses came from there, and they know the way back, so they will lead me."

"Lordy! I doesn't seem ter be no count fer nothin'."

"Well, I'll give you a chance to save your life, and, if you tell me the truth, we can trade for it; but, if you do not, I'll take you to the fort, and Colonel Barry will hang you."

"Massa Buf'ler Bill, I'll tell yer de truf, ef I never did it afore, sah—jist try me."

"And I will know when you lie to me."

"I beliebes yer, sah."

"How far is that hut from here?"

"'Bout twenty miles, sah."

"Where is it?"

"In Red Cliff Hills, sah."

"Whose is it?"

"Catamount Kit's, sah."

"He is a trapper and hunter?"

"Yes, sah."

"That is, he is so known at the fort, and has as pets several tame catamounts."

"Yes, sah; an' dey is same as cats ter him, fer he riz 'em from kittens."

"But really he is a spy for the Raiders—one of the band?"

"Don't tell him I tole yer, sah, fer he is er howlin' terror."

"He is a Raider?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who lives at the cabin with him?"

"His catamounts, sah."

"Answer me!"

"De young gal."

"What is her name?"

"I don't know, sah; but I calls her missy, an' de cap'n sent me dah ter cook fo' her."

"And to watch her?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who else?"

"Only Boss, sah, an' Kit, and his catamounts."

"All right."

"You can get supper now, and then I'll talk further with you, for we go to the hut to-night."

"Oh, Lordy! dat ends dis poor nigger!"

"Not if you act right by me."

"But Catamount Kit will kill us bofe, sah."

"I'll take all chances as to that; but you know where the retreat of the Raiders is?"

The negro did not reply.

Buffalo Bill took out his revolver, and the words came quickly:

"Yes, sah, I knows."

"How far is it from here?"

"In de West Mounting Range, sah."

"How many are there in the retreat?"

"About thirty, sah, in the fightin' band; now yer has got Monte, Bill Bronze, Bad Ben, Boss, thar, an' me; but dey is mostly trailin', only goin' ter de den at times."

"I see."

"Well, after you have cooked us some supper and buried your dead pard there, we will move on to Kit's cabin."

"An' when we gits dere, de debbil will be ter pay," said the negro.

The scout laughed and said:

"I'll take all chances, Dark, so don't scare yourself to death, and I may want you for further work."

"Yer has got me," was the disconsolate reply of the much-alarmed negro.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RESCUE.

The cabin of Catamount Kit would have been impossible to find, even for Buffalo Bill, had he not been guided thither, or, at least, been following a well-marked trail.

But he had mounted the horse of the dead outlaw to have him take the trail should the negro play him

false, which, however, he did not believe would be the case.

It was nearly dawn when the scout and the negro, after filing through a narrow cañon, came to the cabin and were greeted with a loud whine.

"Dat's de cattermount, so look out, massa, for he is er terror," whispered the negro.

He spoke just in time, for the animal came with a spring, and then there was just one thing to do, and the scout did it.

He fired, and the beast dropped dead, while instantly came an answering shot, and it struck the negro fairly in the head, and tumbled him from his saddle a dead man.

"What is yer firin' on yer pards fer, Kit—it is I, Boss," called out Buffalo Bill, trying to appear as the negro's pard.

"Why didn't yer give ther signal I give yer, then?" growled Kit.

"I didn't expect it was needed."

"Waal, yer found it were, an' it don't do ter run on a man as is hunted fer crime, an' not sing out who yer is—did I kill ther nigger?"

"Yer is on foot, so come an' see."

"All right—an' yer got my rum?"

"I got this, too."

"What are it?"

"This—hands up, Catamount Kit!" and Bill thrust his revolver right into the face of the man.

With the quickness of one of his catamounts, the man darted right under the scout's horse, firing as he did so.

He killed Buffalo Bill's horse, but, as the animal fell, his rider dropped behind him and fired at the man, who was bounding toward his cabin.

Quick as was the shot, it brought the man to earth, but Catamount Kit was game, and he opened fire upon the scout, and a rapid duel followed.

"It was hot while it lasted," said Buffalo Bill, rising from behind his horse, where he had been crouching, when there came bounding toward him two huge catamounts, howling and growling furiously.

Buffalo Bill just had time to draw another weapon and fire.

He was not an instant too soon, and well for him was it that his aim was deadly.

"This looks like a slaughter pen," said the scout, grimly, as he stood in the early dawn glancing about

him, his gaze falling upon the dead negro, the body of Catamount Kit, the three slain catamounts, and his horse, with the horse of Dark and the pack animal standing near.

He saw a cabin not a hundred feet away, and as he looked the door opened and a girl appeared, and called out:

"Oh! what has happened?"

"Have those come who will rescue me?"

"Yes, indeed, miss; I am your friend—a scout from Fort Blank, and all of your guard are dead, if Catamount Kit, Boss and the negro were all," said Buffalo Bill.

"Yes, they are all; but the negro and Boss are away, and Kit was my only guard."

"The three are accounted for, and the three cats as well, which I believe were all."

"Yes, he had three of the horrid pets; but surely you are not alone, sir?"

"Oh, yes, and I have come to rescue you, for I believe you are Miss Hurst?"

"Yes, I am Lou Hurst, and what have I not suffered! But how did you know I was here?"

"I found your brother, Ben, and——"

There was a cry of joy, and Buffalo Bill walked quickly to the door.

Then he told her the story of how he had found the brave boy, Ben, and that he was then safe at the fort, and also of how he had made the discovery of her being at the cabin, and had come there to rescue her.

"Oh, sir, how much I do owe to you; but we must not stay here, for Captain Monte may come here——"

"Monte is dead, miss."

"Have you killed him, too?"

"He was captured, and was executed at the fort weeks ago."

"No, no, for he was here only five days ago and sent Boss and Dark to the settlement after provisions."

"Not Monte?"

"Yes."

"Do you know Monte?"

"Can I ever forget him; for was it not Monte that murdered those I loved, and when I escaped he caught me and brought me here, where I have been ever since."

"I say it was not Monte you executed, for he was

lately here, and is coming back to meet the men he sent to the settlement.

"Please take me away from here at once, sir."

"I will do so, miss, and when you get us some breakfast I will bury those bodies."

Lou Hurst turned quickly to get breakfast, while the scout dug a grave for the negro and Catamount Kit.

He found also two very fine horses in the pen back of the cabin, and, saddling them, placed the girl on one of them, mounted the other himself, and, with the pack animals and two others in lead, he rode away before the sun was an hour high.

"If it were not for this poor, frightened girl, I would stay there and greet this Captain Monte when he comes; but I dare not risk it now, for if harm befall me it will rest upon her," mused the scout, as he rode along.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN TO THE FORT.

The fort was in sight, for the flag could be seen over the tree tops far in the distance, and Buffalo Bill pointed it out to Lou Hurst, who clapped her hands with joy.

And the scout said:

"Miss Lou, yonder comes a horseman toward us, and—yes, it is my boy pard, your brother, miss."

It was true, for it was the Boy in Buckskin—Ben Hurst—who now came at full speed toward them.

In ten minutes more, Ben dashed up, and Buffalo Bill called out:

"I have kept my promise to you, boy pard, and found your sister."

Words cannot tell the joy of the two, and Ben listened to the story of the rescue, but his face was pale, and he seemed worried, and said:

"Mr. Cody, I came out scouting for you, hoping to meet you, for you must not go to the fort."

"And why not, Ben?" asked the scout, in surprise.

"Well, Buffalo Bill, the colonel has outlawed you!" cried the Boy in Buckskin.

"How dare he do——"

"Don't blame him, sir, for appearances are fearfully against you."

"What appearances—what is against me?" hotly asked the scout.

"Well, sir, you know how the traitor scout got

you into trouble, and nearly had you shot? Well, this time Paymaster Leigh comes in with an ambulance and with two soldiers, one of them dying, and he was held up the day after you left and robbed by a masked man in buckskin, who got from him ten thousand dollars, after wounding one of the soldiers.

"The paymaster fired at the robber as he mounted his horse, and the bullet grazed his cheek and cut off his mask, and he was surprised to see that it was you."

"Nonsense!"

"But the paymaster swears to it, and he knows you well, while the two soldiers said the same, the dying man said the same—for he got to the fort some time before his death.

"The lieutenant called you by name, and added:

"'You, of all men, to do this!' and you, he said, replied:

"'Yes, I am Buffalo Bill, and the secret is out also that I am Monte, the Trail Raiders' chief.'"

"This is infamous!" cried Buffalo Bill, his face livid.

"I do not believe it, Pard Bill—would not believe my own eyes against you; but it is believed by all at the fort now, except Keno, for even Captain Cecil Lorne and Miss Barry do not doubt it, as they cannot doubt Lieutenant Leigh and the two soldiers."

"Well, boy pard, I doubt it, and to the fort I go."

"You must not."

"But I will."

"They say you will be tried by drumhead court-martial and shot."

"I'll take all chances, black as things appear against me.

"Come, let me not cloud the joy of your sister's return."

"But, alive, you can, in the end, prove that you are not guilty; but, dead, you cannot."

"A good argument, boy pard, but to the fort I go."

"It was your horse, saddle, form, face and all," urged Ben, "for the lieutenant said so, and also the soldiers, for I talked with them, and so did old Scout Keno."

"I'll go," and the scout, though also entreated by Lou Hurst, led the way on to the fort.

As he rode, the scout meditated sadly upon his ill fortune.

He recalled how he had very nearly been sacrificed

for the killing of Bill Bronze, and how, later, Monte, the traitor scout, had made charges against him, which many, with the circumstantial evidence against him, had really believed.

"Some one is plotting to hang me, I can plainly see; but I will yet down them, if I can only keep them from hanging me until I get the chance.

"But now I must take the chances—and will."

Soon after they were discovered from the fort, and all was excitement there.

Colonel Barry heard the noise, and stepped quickly to the window of his quarters and looked out.

"What is all that noise?" he asked.

As he asked the question, he saw a man riding quietly toward his quarters, and exclaimed:

"It is Buffalo Bill!"

"It cannot be possible, sir," cried Captain Cecil Lorne, who was with him.

"Yes—and he is riding as coolly up to my quarters as though he expected a pleasant welcome."

"Yet he must know that Leigh has reported him," answered Captain Lorne.

Buffalo Bill's face was very stern and pale, while, halting his horse, he asked:

"What does this mean—a soldier escort?"

"It means, Cody, that you are under arrest," answered Lieutenant Lancaster.

"Ah, what crime am I now guilty of?"

"You will soon know; but surrender your belt of arms, sir."

Without delay, Cody handed over the weapons, dismounting at the same time.

"Hold out your hands," came the next order.

It was obeyed, and the officer placed upon the wrists a pair of manacles.

"Sergeant, lead this man to the guardhouse," was the next command, and Cody was marched off, while his boy pard, Ben, and his sister, whom Buffalo Bill had rescued, went on to the lieutenant, their hearts full to overflowing.

"You may save him, sister Lou," said Ben, earnestly, as they reached the colonel's door.

CHAPTER X.

THE SENTENCE.

Whatever feelings Ben, the boy scout in buckskin, Scout Keno, and a few others felt for Buffalo Bill, in regard to his innocence, against all seeming facts,

they were not held by those before whom he was to be tried for supposed murder and robbery.

Some one had been suspected of giving information to the Raiders, and, with the exception of the traitor scout, Monte, it was supposed that it would end; and yet it had continued, so now, of course, it was blamed on Buffalo Bill, for the great scout was not then known in the Southwest as he was in the Northern country.

Although Monte was dead, there was still a spy in the fort beyond doubt, and, with the charges made by Lieutenant Leigh, Cody was considered to be that spy.

It was a very painful position for Colonel Barry to be placed in, for twice had Cody saved the life of his daughter, Marie, and Cecil Lorne also owed the same debt of gratitude to the scout more than once; but the rumors, the innuendoes, and, lastly, the charges direct of Lieutenant Leigh against the chief of scouts, decided even those who had been the truest friends of Cody to believe him guilty.

When Ben went to the colonel, accompanied by his sister, and she told how the scout had rescued her, and how she had been held a prisoner by "Captain" Monte, the chief of the Trail Raiders, it was a surprise to the fort's commandant.

She also claimed that Monte was alive, and that the man executed was not the chief of the outlaws.

The colonel sent for Lieutenant Leigh, and, questioning him, found that Buffalo Bill could have held him up, as claimed, at the time stated, and then have gone on the Rancher's Settlement in time to see Lulu Dallas, as Ben told how he had done.

"The trial must show the truth, Lorne," had said the colonel, and he sent for his daughter, to place Lou Hurst in her charge.

Buffalo Bill was to be tried on the past charges, as well as the present, although the death of Bill Bronze at his hands had been gone over at the former trial, the chief of scouts admitting the killing of the man, but because he was first fired upon from ambush by him, and not, as it was said in the dying confession of the man, that it was a murder.

If Buffalo Bill was really the spy of the Raiders, as Monte had been proven to be, as well as Bronze, why had he, Scout Cody, sought, as claimed, to kill Monte?

Monte had certainly been shot at on two occa-

sions, and by Buffalo Bill, it was claimed; but why, if they were members of the same band?

This puzzled many, and yet, as the mystery could not be solved, then a victim must be had, and Cody, being under suspicion, must be that victim.

But the last, and direct, charge of Lieutenant Leigh, the paymaster, that he had recognized Buffalo Bill as the man who had held him up, robbed him of government money and killed a soldier, convinced all, save a very few, that the scout was guilty as charged, and it was decided that there must have been some recent quarrel between the scout and Monte, that caused the former to wish to get rid of him.

Then the news was spread around that Lou Hurst, rescued from the Trail Raiders by the scout, claimed that Monte was not dead.

Altogether, it was a very complicated and mysterious case, and, if Buffalo Bill could not clear it all up at his trial, then he would have to suffer the death penalty, and that would end it—even satisfy those who demanded his life.

In trying a man thus accused, no time was to be lost, and a drumhead court-martial was at once ordered for the following day.

The hour of trial came round, and the prisoner was led before his accusers.

He was pale, yet calm, and seemed not at all afraid of the fate that he felt must be his, with the charges against him.

The first witness called was Captain Lorne, who went over the testimony given at the former trial, regarding the dying confession given to him by Bronze (William Dallas), who had said that he was ruthlessly shot down by Buffalo Bill.

Then followed those who had witnessed the shot fired into the cabin of Monte, then chief of scouts, and the bullet was produced.

It fitted exactly the weapon of Buffalo Bill, and no other weapon in the fort.

Then, too, the timber from which it had been fired was too far off for any other rifle to risk a shot that far.

Then came the witnesses of the shot fired at Monte, which knocked away his cigar, and all who saw the horseman, lighted up by the discharge of the rifle for an instant, swore that it was Buffalo Bill.

No, there was one who said:

"He hed ther look o' Chief Cody, I admits, but I

might be mistaken, fer, with all ther folkeses on the yearth, it w'u'd be strange ef sum o' them didn't look jist like ther others."

This was from the lips of Keno, the scout.

Then came Lieutenant Edgar Leigh, the paymaster, and in a few straightforward words he told the story of the robbery of himself, and the knocking off of the hat, which revealed who the leader was that called himself Alva, or Monte.

"Was the prisoner masked in his attack upon you?" asked Colonel Barry.

"He was, sir."

"Did you hear him speak on that occasion?"

"I did, sir."

"You know that the prisoner has a ringing voice of peculiar tone?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did the voice of the outlaw leader strike you, as compared with that of the prisoner?"

"I had not thought of that, sir, but now I remember that the voice of Buffalo Bill was deeper than ordinarily."

Then Keno was recalled, and told his story in his quaint way, adding:

"I don't do no sw'aring thet it were Chief Cody; but, ef it wasn't, then he were es much like him es twin peas, though I do now remember thet ther voices was dif'rent."

With all of this damning testimony, it seemed as though the prisoner had not a chance for life.

But he was asked by Colonel Barry:

"Now, Mr. Cody, what have you to say against these charges?"

"I am not guilty, sir," was the calm reply.

"You deny having fired the shot from the timber that so nearly killed Monte in his cabin?"

"I do deny it, sir."

"You disavow having shot at him the same night when he was lighting his cigar?"

"I never shot at him in my life, Colonel Barry."

"You assert this on oath?"

"Certainly; for, had I shot to kill him, I would have done so."

"Do you also deny, prisoner, that you also halted Paymaster Leigh on the trail?"

"Emphatically, I deny it, sir."

"And that you robbed him?"

"I did not see him, sir."

"Also, you gave to the daughter of Bronze the money which was sent to her by you?"

"I did, sir, and hold her receipt."

"You also disavow having attacked and robbed Paymaster Leigh?"

"I do, sir."

"Then you admit the truth of not a single charge against you?"

"Not one."

"This is strange, prisoner."

"I admit that appearances are terribly against me; but I am not guilty."

"Where were you after the last attack of the Indians in the mountains?"

"I dogged their steps on their retreat until they sent a special force after me."

"Then I retreated, the twelve warriors pursuing me, and, in a fight with them, I killed two of their number, after which I showed them the speed of my horse, and they turned back, knowing how useless it was to follow me."

"And where did you go then?"

"I met a train whose guide had been killed, and I led it on to the upper country."

"And then?"

"I started for the fort, but struck a trail which I believed was made by the Raiders, and scouted on it for a day or two."

"And this is all you have to say?"

"All, sir."

"Your word is against the testimony of many, and those who have been your friends."

"I know it, sir, and I do not censure one of them for what they have said, as I believe that they labor under a mistake in identity."

"I have no more to say, sir, and am ready for sentence."

"And your sentence, William F. Cody, is that you be hanged for your crimes, at sunset, one week from to-day," impressively said Colonel Barry.

The prisoner never flinched, but said, in his calm way:

"Colonel Barry, I do not fear death; but I beg of you, for the sake of the services which you will admit I have rendered the government, that you allow me to be shot, and not die at the end of a rope."

"As a common murderer, he deserves hanging," boldly said a voice.

"Silence, sir! How dare you speak thus?" sternly

said Colonel Barry, turning upon the man with flashing eyes, while Keno said:

"Yer struck ther wrong trail thet time, pard Brand."

"Prisoner," said Colonel Barry, "I change your sentence from hanging to shooting."

"One week from to-day you are to be led forth by a file of soldiers and shot."

"I thank you, Colonel Barry, and you will find that I will meet death fearlessly."

The prisoner was led away in double irons, and taken to the log cabin which served as a guard-house, and left alone with his thoughts, while a sentinel was placed in front of his door, with orders to admit no one to see him without orders from the commandant.

CHAPTER XI.

KENO AND THE BOY PARD OF CODY.

"Leetle pard, you heerd ther sintence in ther case?" said Keno, as he visited Ben in his cabin the night following the condemnation of Buffalo Bill.

"I did."

"Does yer think it were squar'?"

"I think it was intended to be just, considering the testimony, Keno, but I believe that all who testified were mistaken as to the one whom they saw being Buffalo Bill."

"Thet idee kin'er haunts my mind."

"But what is we men goin' ter do about it?"

"I'll tell you what I am going to do about it," said the boy, abruptly.

"What are thet?"

"I intend to save the life of Buffalo Bill?"

"'Tain't so easy did."

"Are you afraid to help me?"

"Does I look skeery, pard?"

"No."

"Does I act skeert?"

"No."

"Waal, I hain't skeered in the least."

"Then we kin get him out."

"Thar must be no killin'."

"There shall not be, for that would only get us into trouble, and ruin all."

"Fact."

"Have you got any plan to suggest, Keno?"

"Ther sentinel hes ther keys o' his irons?"

"He walks up and down afore the door, an' sometimes he sits on ther bench."

"So I noticed to-night."

"Thar hain't no one else in ther guardhouse now?"

"Fortunately for our plans, there is not."

"Ther nearest anybody are ter ther guard-cabin are a hundred an' fifty feet."

"True."

"Waal, my plan are thet you rides ther pack horse o' Bill out o' camp ter-morrer, fer he gived him ter yer, an' yer sails off arter sum wild ponies."

"Catch a good one, an' then return an' tell how ther black got away from yer; but don't yer tarn up afore sunset, so nobody will be able ter go huntin' fer him."

"Yer can leave ther black over at ther edge o' ther chaparral, whar ther ol' military camp was, an' which are jist three mile from ther fort."

"Yes."

"Then when night comes on, I'll dress up in some sojer clothes, fer I kin git a sergeant's suit, an' es I hain't got no beard ter speak of, I'll git thet false hair thet Captain Lorne wore at ther masked fandango some time ago, an' put it on, fer I seen it hangin' up in his room near ther window, and I kin reach in and git my grip onto it."

"I'll walk, bold es a billy goat, up ter ther sentinel, an' jist grab him by ther throat, so he can't squeal, an' yer knows thet ther hain't but one man in these camps es kin loosen my grip."

"And he is Scout Cody?"

"Yas, he kin loosen ther grip o' any man I ever seen."

"Waal, I won't hurt ther sentinel, but I'll jist hev you 'round ther corner o' ther cabin, dressed up es one o' ther ol' squaws over in ther hanger-on camp, an' yer kin tie ther sojer tight es wax, an' I'll gag him."

"Then we kin take ther keys, open ther door, on-lock ther irons, an' jist tell Bill ter skip outer ther fortifications, fer he kin sling a lariat onto a limb o' thet oak near ther wall, and git over beautiful."

"You kin tell him whar his hoss is, an' then we kin shuck our duds, an' go up 'round headquarters an' hang 'round until ther relief guard goes 'round an' ther diskivery is made."

"Keno, your plan is splendid, and we will carry it out; but the weapons of Buffalo Bill are in the colonel's quarters."

"I would like ter hev him git 'em, pard Ben, but I does think he'll hev ter be satisfied without 'em, an' I hes enough an' ter spare."

"Yes, we cannot do more, for to take his arms would bring suspicion on me, as I have the run of the colonel's quarters."

"An' boy pard, yer must be pertic'ler not ter be away in ther evenin' longer then yer kin help."

"Hev ther squaw's rig ready, which I hev in my traps, fer I hev played squaw myself in my time, when goin' inter Injun camps, an' yer kin slip it on, an' all kin be did in ten minutes, an' you be back ag'in and a-blowin' o' thet boogle o' your'n fer all yer is wuth."

"I will, and you must show up at headquarters, too, so as not to be missed."

"But we may get some soldier into trouble."

"Yas; waal, thar is plenty more in ther army, ef they hangs one fer ther settin' o' Buf'ler Bill free."

"I would confess that I did it, before I would see a man hanged, Keno."

"Waal, it depends on what they intended doin' with him."

"How do you mean?"

"Ef they was only goin' ter put him in ther guard-house, all right."

"Ef they jist puts him on double duty, all right."

"But, if they suspect a man, and order him out to be shot?"

"Then we'll step ter ther front, an' save him."

"Good! Now, I am ready for the work. I suppose they will not blame the sentinel for being over-powered."

"They w'u'dn't ef they knew thet my grip were upon him," said Keno, but with no idea of boasting of his strength.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BOY MUSTANGER.

Bright and early the following morning, Ben, the boy bugler, was up, preparing for his wild-horse hunt.

He asked permission of the colonel to go out upon the prairies for a chase of wild mustangs, and that officer said:

"What, Ben, do you intend to try wild-horse catching, too?"

"Yes, sir; I wish to see if I can do so."

"Well, you are a dead shot, a good fencer, an excellent horseman, throw the lariat as well as any man camp, can play the bugle beautifully, and, I do not doubt, will soon become the champion wild-horse rider."

"Thank you, sir; but I wish to catch a faster horse in my pony, for he is a little slow."

"Then you had better ride a fast animal to do the work on."

"How would my daughter's horse, King, suit you, if she would lend it to you, I know?"

"He is not trained for the work, sir."

"Ah, I forgot that."

"Why not take Cody's black, which he gave you, then?" asked Captain Lorne, who was present.

"True; why he is the very horse for you, and the fastest on the prairies," put in the colonel.

"I did not wish to ride him, sir, until after—er—"

"Ah! I understand you—until after poor Cody's death."

"Well, do as you please, Ben."

"I will take him, sir," and Ben turned away, and rode out of the fort for his chase of wild mustangs.

He certainly was in luck, for, ere he had gone half-mile, a large herd was espied, driving along at a good pace, and heading north, the very direction in which the boy wished them to go.

Instantly he gave the word to the black, and away he went at a terrific pace.

Glancing over the herd, Ben picked out the animal he wanted.

It was a long-bodied, high-headed, roan stallion, apparently in a gallop, while the rest of the herd were in the run.

Pressing him, the boy saw him bound away at a pace that showed his speed.

That the herd was strange to that part of the prairie was evident, for the leader was heading in a direction that would bring him upon a deep ravine.

There was a split in the prairie which could not be crossed for a mile on either side of the point toward which the herd was driving.

"Now is my chance," cried Ben, and he pressed on harder after the magnificent roan.

He dashed the herd, and, keeping back, the boy urged them on at their utmost speed, and saw the roan stallion had taken the lead and still kept

up only a sweeping gallop, which showed that he had not let himself out as he could do.

Soon the ravine came in sight, and there was halting, swaying and scattering to the right and left, and then Ben dashed to the front.

The roan had halted in amazement, and was snuffing the air with distended nostrils and head up.

Just then, as he was about to dart away, the lariat was thrown.

It was a long throw, and barely reached; but over the head it settled, and the well-trained black, throwing himself back upon his haunches, the wild mustang was thrown upon the prairie with stunning force.

Quickly Ben had sprung from the saddle and was at his side, thrusting upon him a bow stall.

Then, unloosening the lariat from about his throat, he allowed the gasping animal to arise.

But the daring boy was upon his back, and, instantly, like an arrow from the bow, and with a wild snort of rage and fright, the untamed beast bounded away.

A call to the black, and he came following behind at a pace that kept him near.

The herd had scattered to the right and the left, and were flying in two gangs across the prairie, and up and down the ravine.

Toward one of these bands the roan mustang headed, but he was quickly checked by a jerk upon the bow stall.

Then began a struggle for the mastery between the boy and his equine captive.

And long it lasted, until the roan and his rider were well-nigh exhausted.

But the horseman triumphed over the brute, and the mustang, tamed by a master hand, was ridden toward the point where Ben wished to go.

That was the place of the old encampment in the edge of the chaparral, which led on to the Padre's Rock.

Luxuriant grass was there in abundance, and plenty of water, so that Ben soon had the black unsaddled and lariatied out to rest and feed, while he hopped his roan beyond chance of escape.

Lying down to rest, Ben fell asleep, and the day was drawing to its close when he awoke.

His roan had made the best of the matter by eating the grass at his feet, and the black was thoroughly rested.

Watering the latter at the spring, Ben staked him out again, and then mounted the roan, untied the halter, and let him bound away at full speed with him, guiding him in the direction of the fort.

Into the stockade he dashed just at sunset, and all were delighted at his splendid capture.

"You don't mean you lost the black, Ben?" asked the colonel.

"The last I saw of him, sir, he was a long way behind me, and I had my hands full with the Colonel here, for I have named him after you, sir, with your permission."

"Certainly, my boy, and at the christening I'll present him with a Mexican saddle and bridle," answered the kind-hearted colonel, while Keno remarked:

"Pard Ben, thet animile are a beauty, an' no mistake."

"But don't feel bad about the black, fer sometimes a horse gets tangled in his bridle, an' ef he don't come in to-night, we kin look him up ter-morrer fer you."

Then, as the two went off together, the scout continued:

"Yer hes done prime, boy pard."

"And did you get the uniform?"

"Yas."

"I tell yer, ther plot are a-workin' fust class."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RESCUERS AT WORK.

Boy Ben was very tired after his severe struggle with the roan mustang, but he went up to headquarters soon after dark, and never appeared in better spirits.

After the guards were posted at eight o'clock, he got out his cornet and began to play, and never did he play better, all thought who heard him.

Keno was also loafing around, smoking his pipe, and chatting now and then with an officer.

Presently, he walked quietly away, and Ben saw him disappear in the direction of the soldiers' quarters.

He had not been gone long before the boy laid down his cornet with the remark:

"She needs cleaning, captain, so I'll get my box and clean her up."

"Then you'll see the difference."

Leaning the cornet on the bench, on the brook headquarters piazza, where he had been seated, Ben walked quietly away.

Straight to his cabin he went, and all was darkness within.

But as he stepped in, Keno whispered:

"I is here, pard, and done up like a bold sojer, yer bet."

"Good! Now, where is my rig?"

"Right thar, an' ef it don't make a squaw out yer, I lies."

"I made yer a headgear o' scalps, and in ther box yer finds on ther table are paint fer yer face and hands, so jist jump inter ther rags in no time."

Ben rapidly found the articles referred to, and a couple of minutes was sufficient for him to thoroughly disguise himself.

"Is yer ready, boy pard?"

"I am."

"Then jist skip."

"For the guardhouse?"

"Yes."

"I will go to the rear of it?"

"Yas, an' when yer hears me come up, jist sail ther front."

"Where are the ropes and the gag for his mouth?"

"Here they is in my hand."

"Now, I am ready."

"All right, sail out, boy pard."

Ben left the cabin and cautiously made his way to the guardhouse, arriving in the rear of that gloomy abode in less than ten minutes after he had left his quarters.

The sentinel was pacing to and fro, little dreaming of the plot to free the prisoner, and that he was closely watched.

Soon, from his place of lookout, Ben saw the figure of Keno coming through the darkness.

So upright did he walk, so soldierly did he look in the shadowy light, that Ben feared that it was Keno, his pard.

Straight up to the sentinel he walked, receiving a salute, for the stripes on his arm were visible to the soldier, though he failed to recognize him.

Seeing that he was a stranger, the sentinel was about to halt him, when, with the spring of a panther, Keno was upon him, his hand upon his throat, and he said, in hoarse tones:

"Resist, and you die!"

At that moment, the soldier saw the form of a quaw glide up, and instantly the musket was wrenched from his hands, and he found himself in a ditch he could not shake off.

Nor could he cry out, as the pressure on his throat prevented that.

Half-a-minute was sufficient for the rescuers to load and gag the sentinel securely, and then he was taken around the cabin, out of sight, and the keys were unloosened from his belt.

Unlocking the guardhouse, the daring allies slipped within.

All was darkness, and Keno called out in a whisper:

"Pard!"

No reply; again he called:

"Pard Buf'ler!"

Still no answer.

"Waal, he do sleep sound fer a man what is goin' to be shooted; it hain't like him ter sleep thet way."

"Keno, Buffalo Bill has gone!" cried Ben.

"Gone?"

"Yes."

"Whar?"

"Who knows?"

"Waal, it are so, fer here are his irons, and he skipped."

"Who has aided him, Keno?"

"Somebody has been sooner than we is."

"Well, he is gone, and I am glad of it, though I would have liked to have been the one who aided in the escape, but it seems he has friends here after all."

"So it do."

"Let us return to headquarters, so as not to be suspected."

"All right, pard."

Quietly the two left the cabin, the sentinel was brought back and placed before the door, which they unlocked, and tied to the logs, with his musket at his shoulder arms, so that any one seeing him when coming would suspect nothing wrong.

When the two returned to the cabin, threw off their clothes, and Keno went to replace the uniform and beard, and Ben washed his face, and, seizing his cornet case, hastened back to headquarters, not having been half-an-hour absent.

And there he played his cornet, with Keno and

others sitting out upon the piazza listening, until the relief guard went around, and the startling news was made known that Buffalo Bill had escaped.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESCAPE.

Buffalo Bill sat alone in his prison of logs.

He heard the hum of the distant camps, the singing of the birds, and the steady tramp of the sentinel before his door.

These were the sounds that reached his ears, while his eyes fell upon bare walls of roughly-hewn logs, a table, a cot, a campstool, and no more.

At last there fell into the room a tiny ray of light.

It was a golden beam of sunlight, cast by the sun just as it was going down beyond the horizon.

"It seems like a ray of hope amid the gloom that surrounds me," murmured the prisoner.

Then the door was opened, and a soldier entered with the supper for the prisoner.

No word passed between the two, the meal was placed silently upon the table, and then Buffalo Bill was alone once more.

Darkness now fell upon the scene, and he sat by the table, his head buried in his hands, his supper untouched.

Suddenly, he heard a peculiar sound.

It seemed like the gnawing of a rat, though from where it came he could not tell.

Now and then it would cease, and then again he would hear it.

What could it mean?

At last the sound changed to one that was grating, and then he looked up, for overhead it seemed to be.

He knew that the roof was whole and firm, and yet now he distinctly saw light shining through.

And on the roof he placed the sound.

Instantly, he discovered the cause.

"That brave boy is trying to rescue me," he said.

Still the grating sound continued, unheard by the sentinel that paced to and fro in front of the cabin.

"He may not hear it.

"I will sing to drown the noise, though he works almost noiselessly, and if he is discovered, the guard will kill him."

Then the prisoner broke forth into a lively melody that caused the guard to mutter:

"That man has more pluck than generally falls to human beings.

"He sings well, too; but his voice will be hushed before long, and it's a pity, for I hate to see a brave man die, even if he is a bad one."

Thus mused the sentinel, little dreaming that on the other side of the roof a person was working like a beaver to prevent the prisoner from dying.

And Cody sang on, running from one air into another until at last he beheld a square opening in the roof fully large enough for him to get through.

Then the space was darkened, and a human form was visible, relieved against the clear sky.

The next instant a human being stood by his side, having come down by means of a rope.

"Mr. Cody, I have come to save you," said a low voice.

"You here, to save me?" he cried in a whisper.

"Yes."

"I am sorry you came, for I must remain and meet my fate."

"You must do no such silly thing, for after I have risked so much to save you I will not hear of your refusing to go."

"But——"

"I will hear of no excuses.

"You are sentenced to die within five days, and die you must, if you remain here.

"I believe that you are innocent, and once free from here you can prove that you are not the guilty one it is claimed that you are."

"God bless you for those kind words."

"Then you will go, for I have the keys, which I took from the colonel's desk. I secured your arms and left them outside."

"You have risked much to save me."

"Then lose no time, but go at once."

"But who has helped you?"

"No one, for I dared not trust any one, fearing that it might get them into trouble."

"And you have done all this to save me?"

"Yes, and hope you will not delay now. I bored into the roof with an auger, and used a small saw to open a space. The rope is made fast, so will hold your weight."

Then the scout climbed to the roof, and he saw that the rope had been made fast to a tree growing in the rear of the log cabin and overhanging the roof.

Quickly, yet noiselessly, the rescuer slipped into

the branches of the tree, and dropped upon ground, the scout following closely.

"I was unable to get a horse for you, Mr. C. but the chaparral is not far away, and, once there, you can defy pursuit, knowing the country as you do."

"Besides, you have a long start. Here are your arms for you."

"Oh, how good you have been to me!"

"Do not speak of it. Here is also your lariat, you can scale the stockade at the large tree you see."

"Now, go, and if you are innocent, prove you are so."

"And if I am guilty?" he said, in a low tone.

"Then go your way with your conscience, and there will be enough punishment for you, in my mind."

"It will."

"Good-by."

He held out his hand, and it was firmly grasped by his rescuer, who then motioned him away.

Following slowly, and keeping the scout in sight, the one who had risked so much and accomplished all that was intended, saw him throw his lariat over the naked branch of a tree, and then quickly run to the top of the stockade.

The rescuer at once ran nimbly in the direction of the officers' quarters, disappearing from sight in the shadow of a large cabin.

A moment after, that same person sank down upon a lounge, as though overcome with excitement and fatigue, and cried, earnestly:

"Thank God, I have saved him!"

The speaker appeared to be a youth, and was dressed in a soldier's uniform.

But as the light fell full upon the face, it revealed the pale, beautiful face of Marie Barry, the colonel's daughter.

Half-an-hour after, she had cast aside her uniform and was seated upon the piazza of her own home, listening to the boy bugler's music, while her father sat near by, smoking a cigar in silence, and dreaming of the bold part his daughter had played to save the life of Buffalo Bill, the condemned soldier who was then going across the prairie at a brisk pace in the direction of the chaparrals, where, he knew, there was safety for him from all pursuit.

CHAPTER XV.

KENO SPEAKS.

The excitement that existed at Fort Blank and its adjoining camps was intense, when it became known that Buffalo Bill had escaped.

How he had done so the hole in the roof showed conclusively, and yet there was a deep mystery about it.

When the relief guard went to the cabin, the sentinel there was discovered in a very disagreeable and embarrassing situation.

He stood against the walls of the guardhouse, firmly bound and gagged, and his musket was secured to his side as though he held it there on duty.

His story was told to Colonel Barry, before whom the sergeant at once brought him.

"Now, sir, what have you to say for yourself?" sternly asked the colonel.

The man's mouth was in by no means good talking condition, after his having been gagged so long, but he blurted out:

"I'll tell you, sir—I'll tell you."

"That is what I wish you would do, sir, and lose no time about it."

"Well, sir, I was pacing my beat after the prisoner had stopped singing——"

"Singing?"

"Yes, sir, he was singing awful gay for a long time.

"Then he stopped, and presently I saw a soldier coming toward me."

"Who was it?"

"That I do not know, sir, but he wore a sergeant's stripes and had a long beard."

"What man answers that description, Lorne?" asked the colonel, turning to Captain Lorne, who answered:

"Corporal Dunn has a long beard, sir."

"But this man was not the corporal, sir," said the guard.

"And you do not know who he was?"

"No, sir."

"This is very strange, my man."

"I know it, sir, but he came right up to me, and, seeing that I did not know him, I was about to halt him, when he jumped upon me and took me by the throat, at the same time telling me that he would kill me if I resisted."

"Were you not strong enough to resist him, for you appear to be a very powerful man, Richards?"

"I was like a baby in his hands, sir, and then came an old Injun squaw."

"A squaw?"

"Yes, sir—one of them that lives over in the camps."

"Which one?"

"Lor', sir, they is all alike."

"That is true."

"Well, what did the squaw do?"

"She helped to tie my hands and feet, sir, and shoved the gag in my mouth."

"See here, sir, she cut my lips opening my mouth, and you can just see that that man hurt my throat," and the soldier exhibited the results of Keno's grip upon him.

"Yes, you were not handled with gloves; but I am glad that it was no worse, my man."

"Now, tell me what was then done?"

"They took me around the corner of the cabin, sir, and laid me down, taking my keys from me."

"They then departed for a few minutes, but returned and tied me up as the guard found me."

"And you did not see them bring the prisoner out?"

"No, sir."

"And know nothing about the hole sawed in the roof?"

"No, sir."

"Nor heard the sawing?"

"No, sir, I am just a trifle deaf."

"Ah!"

"Well, my man, I think you have overdone your part, for I believe you are guilty."

"Guilty, sir?"

"Yes—for you, and you only, had the keys, excepting those in my desk, that unlock the guardhouse and the prisoner's irons."

"You overdid the matter in allowing the prisoner to cut that hole in the roof and then tie you up as the guard found you."

"Ah, sir, I am not guilty."

"Have you searched the man, sergeant?"

"No, sir."

"Do so."

The soldier was searched, and in his pockets was found a large roll of bills, amounting to several hundred dollars.

"Ah, this looks bad."

"Where did you get this money, my man?"

The soldier hesitated, and said:

"I found it, sir, in the Indian camp, at the last fight."

"I do not believe you, Richards, and it pains me to say so, for you have been a good soldier."

"Sergeant, lead him to the guardhouse, and, if the prisoner is not captured, I will take the responsibility of having Richards shot, for his crime is worse than desertion, for he has accepted a bribe to set free a man who had cost the government many lives and hundreds of thousands of dollars."

The soldier turned piteously toward his commander, but was sternly ordered off, and the sergeant was just putting the irons upon him when Keno stepped into the room.

"Col'nel, them irons belongs on my wrists, and not on his'n."

"What do you mean, Keno?" asked the colonel, starting to his feet in surprise, while all looked upon him with astonishment.

"I means thet ther sojer did find ther money in ther Injuns' camps, as others did, too, fer I seen 'em with it, an' he didn't get it ter let Scout Cody go free."

"How do you know this, Keno?"

"From hev'in' set Scout Cody free myself."

"What?"

"Fact."

"Do you mean it?"

"Waal, I'll confess thet I stole Sergeant Bodine's uniform an' hat, gobbled up thet false beard thet hangs in ther cap'n's room, an' walked up beautiful to ther sojer."

"He were goin' ter bay'net me, I guesses, but I are a trifle too quick in movin', an' so I jist got my squeezer onto his throat and tied him."

"But who was the squaw that aided you?"

This was a poser for Keno, and he remained silent.

"What squaw was it that aided you?"

"Lordy, col'nel, you hain't goin' ter visit my sins on thet ole Injun gal?"

"I must know her name."

"Hain't I enuf ter suffer?"

"No, you must tell me who aided you."

"Waal, col'nel, fer ther fust time in my life, I disobeys orders, so jist sot Richards loose an' take me out an' shoot me, ef yer wants ter, fer I'm durned ef I tells who helped me do it!"

CHAPTER XVI.

A FAIR PRISONER.

"And do you mean, sir, that you set Cody free?" sternly asked Colonel Barry.

"I means jist thet, sir, so put ther irons on me, fer thet sentinel hain't ther one ter punish," was the frank reply of Keno.

"Sergeant, set Richards free."

This was done; and then the colonel continued:

"Richards, I ask your pardon for my suspicions of you; but it looked so thoroughly against you that——"

"It looks ag'in Buf'ler, too, col'nel, but I believes he hain't guilty," put in Keno.

"Silence, sir!"

"I wish the scout could have been proven innocent as you are, Richards. Now, you can go, and tomorrow I shall promote you to be ordnance sergeant in place of poor Burns, who was killed the other day. I do this to make amends for the wrong done you."

Richards bowed his thanks, and waited to hear what Keno would say now, for he said:

"I'd like to know, sir, please, about the hole in the roof."

"True; how came that there, Keno?"

"Col'nel, I hev confessed to you thet I set Bill free."

"I am ther man thet seized Richards here, an' I is willin' ter take ther consequences."

"More, I doesn't intend to say."

"But you can tell me why you made that hole in the roof of the guardhouse, when you had the key to let the scout out of the door."

"Waal, yer see, I hed dif'rent plans fer free him, an' when I got ther keys, I didn't need the hole in ther roof fer him."

"Well, sir, do you know that you have taken your life in your hands in setting free the Raider chief?"

"Col'nel, it were Scout Cody I set free."

"And he was found guilty of being an outlaw."

"It did look thet way, sir, but he hain't been executed as sich yet, an' maybe he won't."

"But you have set all discipline at defiance in freeing him."

"I am here to take ther consequences," was the cool reply.

"And you shall, for I do not intend that you shall

escape, and, as I said to Richards, so I say to you, that you shall be shot for your act."

"You knows best, col'nel."

"Pardon me, Colonel Barry, but Scout Keno is not the only guilty one, for I aided him," said Ben, stepping into the room.

"You?" gasped the colonel, for he had learned to love the boy bugler as though he were his own son.

"Yes, sir, for I am the old squaw," and Ben smiled pleasantly, as though he had been playing a joke in impersonating the old squaw.

"Ben Hurst, this is a most serious matter for you," sternly said the colonel.

"It was more serious for poor Bill," was the answer of the boy, though not with any desire to be impertinent.

"You are young, deeply attached to Cody, and hardly knew the gravity of the crime which you were committing, so——"

"You are mistaken, Colonel Barry, for I fully knew all that I did, and I expect my punishment to be the same as that which you threaten Keno with, for I am equally guilty."

"Boy pard, why in thunder didn't yer keep yer mouth shet, fer they'd never hev diskivered the old squaw ter be you?"

"You should not suffer alone, Keno."

"Waal, we went inter ther big end o' ther horn together, an' we comes out o' ther leetle end, side by side," said Keno.

"Sergeant, put that boy in irons, too, for he is equally guilty," sternly said Colonel Barry.

"One moment, sergeant."

The speaker was Marie Barry, and she stepped between the sergeant and the boy bugler, while she took from the hands of the former the iron handcuffs which he held.

No one had suspected her presence until she had glided into the room.

"Marie!" cried the colonel, as she approached.

Quickly she clasped the irons upon her own wrists, and, holding out her little hands toward her father, he said, in calm and distinct tones:

"Colonel Barry, now you have the guilty one."

"Marie, for God's sake, what does this all mean?" cried the mystified colonel.

"It means that I set Buffalo Bill free."

From every lip came an exclamation at this calm assertion, while Keno said:

"Waal, thet do beat all, an' no mistake.

"Don't it, boy pard?"

But Ben's gaze was fixed upon the beautiful girl as she stood boldly before her father.

"Are you mad, child?" gasped the colonel.

"No, sir."

"Then why do you make such an assertion?"

"Because it is true."

"This man says that he set Buffalo Bill free, and Ben confesses to having aided him in the act.

"Now, you say that you are the guilty one."

"Permit me to explain, father; then, as a soldier's daughter, I am willing to suffer punishment, if you so will, with Keno and Ben."

"Then explain at once."

"You know that I have never believed that Buffalo Bill, as the scout is called, was guilty of the charges against him?"

"Yes; you have foolishly so said."

"You will also remember, father, that he thrice saved my life?"

"I do remember, my child," and the voice of the kind-hearted father trembled.

"Owing him my life, and in my heart believing him to be innocent, it was not in my nature to see him perish.

"I, therefore, determined to save his life, if possible.

"To do this I reconnoitered the guardhouse thoroughly, and observed that a tree grew close to it in the rear.

"This was an aid to my purpose, and I secured a stout rope, an auger and a saw for my use.

"Then I got Nita, my maid, to bring me the new uniform the regimental tailor had just made for Ben, and I dressed up in it——"

"Oh, Marie, my child!"

"I could not climb the tree with skirts on, father," innocently said Marie.

Then she continued:

"I took the keys of the guardhouse and manacles from your desk, recovered the weapons belonging to the scout, and set to work.

"I bored auger holes in the roof, and the saw did the rest.

"Then I fastened my rope to the overhanging limbs and went into the cabin, unlocked the irons that held Mr. Cody in durance, and bade him fly.

"He at first refused; but I told him I believed him innocent, and to go and prove himself so.

"Then he departed, scaling the stockade wall by the help of the oak tree that grows near it, and, thank Heaven, he is free!

"As for Keno and Ben, they doubtless meant to rescue their friend, but I was before them," and Marie smiled.

"Durned ef yer wasn't ahead, an', ef yer ain't a glory, then set me down fer a weepin' liar," bluntly said Keno, lost in admiration of the act of the brave girl.

"Marie, my child, I know not what to do, for you have been equally guilty with this man and boy."

"Permit me, Colonel Barry, to suggest that you release the trio, for Keno and Ben intended releasing Cody, and Miss Barry did so," said Captain Cecil Lorne.

"It will be said that I do so on account of my daughter."

"It makes no difference, sir, what is said, so long as Miss Barry is not made to feel unpleasantly for acting on an impulse that was right—to serve one who had saved her life."

"Then I will drop the matter here; but, if ever such a thing occurs again in my command, I will punish the guilty one, even if it be you, Marie.

"Keno, you and Ben are discharged."

The two pards bowed and left the room, followed by the soldiers, and Marie remained alone with her father, who certainly was in no pleasant mood with her for her daring act.

CHAPTER XVII.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

After he had thrown his lariat upon the naked limb of the tree growing near the stockade wall, Buffalo Bill drew himself up into the tree, loosened the noose from about the limb, and then, passing the lariat around it, lowered himself to the other side.

"I am free, and it will be a daring man who attempts to retake me now," he said, as he stood on the outside of the stockade wall.

But which way to go he seemed at a loss to decide for a moment or two.

"I will go to the chaparral, and once there I am safe.

"But it pains me deeply to give up my beautiful horse, but Ben will treat him well, I know.

"Well, I can soon get another animal, and it will not be my fault if I don't get a good one.

"To the chaparrals I go, then."

With this he set off across the prairie at a rapid walk, his belt of arms around his waist, his rifle slung at his back.

A strange circumstance directed his steps toward the old encampment before referred to.

It may have been that he knew that the entrance to the chaparral was easiest at that point, and it may have been accident.

But certain it is that he went straight to the old encampment.

With no expectation of meeting any one there, he was not approaching with caution, but was brought to a sudden halt by hearing the snort of a horse.

"Ha! some one is there," he said.

Instantly he threw himself flat down upon the prairie, and lay thus listening and watching.

"Can it be that some wild mustangs are there?" he muttered.

For a long time he waited, twice hearing the snort of the horse again.

"Some Indian scout may be there, or it may be a Raider."

For some time longer he remained quiet, and then he crept along toward the chaparrals, which rose dark and gloomy before him.

Nearer and nearer he drew, circling around the old encampment, so as to gain the shelter of the chaparrals.

At last he gained their shelter, and then, standing upon a slight rise of the ground, he beheld a horse.

The animal had ceased feeding, and was standing with outstretched head, watching and listening, evidently having scented the presence of the scout.

"That is no wild horse," muttered the scout.

And creeping nearer, he continued:

"He is staked out, and that proves that his master is near.

"But I need a mount, and I'll just borrow that horse."

Moving through the grass, he approached within a few feet of the animal, and a low neigh greeted him.

Instantly he was upon his feet.

"By Heaven! it is my own beautiful Night Hawk!"

With these words he sprang to the side of the animal, who rubbed his nose lovingly against the broad breast of his master, whom he had, without doubt, recognized from the first.

"But what are you doing here, Night Hawk?"

"Perhaps Ben is here, for I left you with him when they said I must die.

"No; some one must have stolen you, and, if so, woe be unto that man.

"Where is he, Night Hawk:

"Where is he, old fellow?"

Following up the lariat at the stake, he found to his surprise his own saddle, bridle and lasso, with his saddle pockets filled with ammunition, evidently taken from his store at the cabin.

The haversack was also full of provisions, and, seeing this, he said:

"Well, whoever ran off with you, Night Hawk, prepared for a long trip, I am glad to see.

"Now, old horse, we'll be off, and, mounted upon you, I'll have no fear of capture."

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

It was ten days after the escape of Buffalo Bill, and the scouts and soldiers sent in pursuit of him had all returned to report that no trace of him could be found, when a courier arrived at the fort, and, after delivering dispatches to Colonel Barry, sought a private interview with Captain Cecil Lorne.

"I have a letter to you, sir, which I promised to deliver only to you, and I was not to let any one see me do so," said the courier.

The captain took the letter, and his face flushed as he read it through slowly.

"My man, say nothing to any one about this, for, of course, you know who gave this to you."

"Scout Cody, sir."

"Poor fellow, he got into trouble here, you know."

"He told me all, sir, and asked me to help him by seeing you, and I was only too glad to do so, for I feel sure he is not guilty, and he says that he can prove it."

The captain and the courier then had a long talk together, after which the officer went to headquarters, and, two hours later, he rode away from Fort Blank at the head of his troop of cavalry, while Keno went along as scout, and Ben, the Boy in Buckskin as bugler.

Captain Lorne had only asked the colonel to allow him to go upon a scouting expedition for a few days, and said nothing about a letter brought him by the courier.

The letter had been a short one, and to the point, for it said:

DEAR SIR:—As one who has proven himself my friend, it is now in your power to aid me to dispel the cloud now resting upon my life.

I have told the bearer of this the cruel story of my trouble, and he will explain what I cannot write, for I waited on the trail of his passing just to send you this, and hoping it would be the courier it has proven to be.

If you will bring your troop and my friends, Keno and Ben, on the second day from this, and meet me at sunset at Red Rock, I will take you on a trail that will bring you honor and also clear my life of the shadow now upon it.

Please do this for me, and confer a lasting debt of gratitude upon
Yours with respect,
BUFFALO BILL.

Before the appointed time, Captain Lorne reached Red Rock with the troop and went into camp.

From a hiding-place, Buffalo Bill saw the soldiers arrive, but did not yet show himself.

Suspecting that Cody saw them and was cautious about approaching, Captain Lorne walked alone away from camp.

When well out of sight, Cody suddenly appeared before him.

"Cody, I am still your friend, for I cannot believe you are guilty, but I have come as you requested," and the officer held out his hand.

"I will take your hand, sir, only when I prove that I am not as black as appearances and circumstantial evidence have painted me.

"But does any one know why you have come?"

"No; and Keno and Ben are with me.

"But you have a report to make?"

"Yes, sir; I have been scouting to find out the retreat of the Trail Raiders, which my arrest caused me to relinquish.

"In the fort are the horses I got from Catamount Kit and his two pards, and which I depended upon to take me upon the trail to the outlaw retreat.

"But I learned enough from the negro, Dark, to enable me to find my way there, and, having done so, I returned to the Overland Trail to head off the courier and report to you.

"Now, sir, I can guide you to the retreat of the Raiders, and we can strike it at dawn, for all of the band will be there then, as some important move is intended, and, if possible, Captain Monte must be taken alive."

"Why, Monte was executed, as you know, Cody."

"Wait and see, sir," was the answer, and, after some further conversation together, the two went to the camp, to the great amazement of the soldiers, who, after a moment, gave the scout a rousing cheer, while Keno and Ben rushed forward and grasped the hand of the man they had tried so hard to save.

It was just one week later that the troop returned to Fort Blank one pleasant afternoon, and with a score of prisoners, several hundred horses, and a number of animals loaded down with packs.

At the head rode Captain Lorne, with Buffalo Bill by his side, while behind came a man mounted on a black horse, dressed in buckskin, and in appearance, size, form and face the very double of Buffalo Bill!

It was Captain Monte Alva, the chief of the outlaw band of Trail Raiders, and whose twin brother, Monte, the traitor scout, had been executed at Fort Blank, was also much like Cody, though the leader of the robbers made up as much like the great scout as possible, and for the very purpose of getting the man he hated and who was his ruthless foe put to death for his crimes.

But though he had nearly been successful, through his escape, Buffalo Bill had run Monte Alva and his

band to earth, and the soldiers had killed half of them when they surprised the camp early in the morning, captured all not slain, got their chief, found the money that had been taken from Paymaster Leigh, and much more, and secured booty in large quantity, with horses and cattle, also.

Colonel Barry heard Captain Lorne's report, and then said:

"Cody, thank God that, through my daughter's act, and Keno's and Ben's efforts, you escaped while, as you were tried by drumhead court-martial and condemned on suspicion, this man Monte and his men shall also be so tried, and on facts against them.

"You have suffered much, been terribly wronged, but we will do all in our power to atone for it all, and the voice of the colonel quivered with emotion.

"It is all over, sir, and shall be forgotten," was the answer, just as Marie and Lou Hurst came in to offer their congratulations to the scout, the former saying, when Buffalo Bill thanked her for saving his life:

"If I had not done so, Mr. Cody, your boy ally Ben, and Scout Keno would have done so."

"I could never forget you, Pard Bill, nor could sister Lou," and placing his silver bugle to his lips with the remark, "we are pards to the end," the boy played, with deep feeling, the melody of "Auld Lang Syne."

Two days later Ben's bugle sounded "Lights out" over the graves of Monte Alva and his men, and Buffalo Bill's Vow of Vengeance had been kept, and his Double had passed off the scenes of his crimes forever.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 54) will contain "Buffalo Bill and the Mad Trapper; or, Finding a Lost Trail." Buffalo Bill soon left Fort Blank and started north on a long trail. It brought him into as wild a country as man ever entered. Read about his adventures with the Crazy Trapper, who lived in the Haunted Mountains. In next week's issue.



THRILLING ADVENTURE



Well, boys, before this you have looked to see whether you were a winner or not in the last contest. We congratulate you if you were. And we congratulate, also, the thousands who almost won—whose contributions were only a shade inferior to those of the prize winners.

Get into the new contest, every one of you. On page 31 you will see full particulars about it.

A Long Trip for a New York Boy.

(By A. R. Sartwell.)

In the spring of 1898 I received from my father, who was in Kansas City, Mo., and whom I had not seen for over fifteen years, money to pay my expenses there.

Of course, boy like, I was anxious to take the trip. It was on Friday I received the money, and on the following Monday I took the train with my ticket reading N. Y. C. and H. R. R. R. and Z. S. M. C., via G. R. J. R. to Kansas City. In crossing the river at Detroit, I met with my first adventure.

At midnight the cars were backed on to the ferryboat at D—. Anxious to know what was going on, I got out of the car and walked along the side to see. Of course, it was dark and I did not see much, but before I knew it we were across the stream and the cars were moving and I ran to get back in my car when I tripped over something in the dark and fell, but in an instant was on my feet and caught my car.

Wednesday morning I arrived in Kansas City, and soon found my father. As to my stay of five months there, let it suffice that at the end of that time I knew the city better than most boys who had been born there.

At the end of five months I decided to return to my home in New York State, so I bade my father good-by, and with \$13 in my pocket started to make a trip of over 1300 miles. My first move was to go to the stockyards, where I procured what is known as a stock pass, which would take me to Chicago via St. Louis, for which I paid \$4.

This was on Friday. On Sunday I found myself in Chicago. The next morning I found work and went to work in the hope of getting money to help me on my way.

But after working a week for them they would not pay me, so I quit them.

Now I was only half way home and dead broke. But I had a lot of courage, so I went over on the lake front, where all the large boats dock and soon got a job as deckhand on a Buffalo boat L. H. V. freight liner. The first night I was on board we went up the Chicago River, taking on our cargo, and I shall never forget the sight the next day we were towed out into the lake where we could work our own screws.

Then we headed for B—. That night we had an awful hard squall, the wind coming over our port side. I was called on watch at 9:30 p. m., and in trying to make my way from the forecabin to the fire hole I was twice very nearly washed overboard, but at last got there all right, except a few bruises.

Arrived in B— two days later all shipshape. I stayed in B— for two days more, when I thought it about time for me to be on my way. I took a street car as far as Lancaster, and stayed all night in a car. Next day I waited all day on a grade

for a freight that I could catch, but none came along going slow enough, so I slept in a cornfield all night. The next morning I caught a freight going about thirty miles an hour and rode in to Rochester, where I got something to eat, and it tasted good, for I had not eaten anything before since Saturday night, and this was Monday noon.

After a good square meal I again caught a freight, but was caught myself at Lyons and put off, but another was just pulling in, going the same way, and I made a dive for it, and almost got my brains knocked out on a bridge trying to get on. I did get on all the same, and rode in to Syracuse, and that night caught a freight on the R. W. and O. in to Watertown, and next day I rode home in the varnished cars.

My Fall From a Swing.

(By E. Wyath Thurmond.)

One day last summer my two cousins and I while walking through a forest found a grape vine suspended from a high tree and concluded to swing on it. We tried it and it made an admirable swing. We swung on it for about two hours, when I got too bold and jumped up and down while swinging out about forty feet above the ground. It weakened the grape vine and at last it broke and I fell about forty feet to the ground. It knocked all the breath out of me for about three minutes and scared my cousins and myself almost to death.

I arose with my cousin's aid and managed to walk home, but I was very sore for several days. I have always been afraid of grape vine swings since then.

The Tables Turned.

(By Chas. Bodley, Connecticut.)

Two thieves had just finished looting the pockets of James Blackfoot, a "gentleman" of a prospering little mining community in Alaska. They had got a watch and \$25 in money.

They were about to retire through the window when Blackfoot himself, with a revolver in his right hand, stepped from the adjoining apartment, which was his bedroom, and gave the thieves a gentle surprise.

"Hands up!" was his greeting to the two startled thieves who obeyed him in a way that showed they had a deep respect for the revolver if they had not for its owner.

"Bob, come here!" called Blackfoot. But Bob didn't come until he had been summoned two or three times. When at last he came in gaping and yawning, and was very much surprised at what he saw.

When he recovered from his surprise his father ordered him to search the thieves' pockets and take all that he found.

Bob removed his dad's watch and \$60 in money, which he gave to his father with a grin.

His father, when Bob had thoroughly sacked the thieves' pockets of all valuables, escorted the two downcast thieves from the house and told them the next time they came to give him notice and he would have a reception in their honor.

Of course the thieves didn't dare tell that Blackfoot had robbed them for fear of being arrested on the charge of attempting to rob Blackfoot, so Blackfoot and his son enjoyed themselves for many a day afterward on the money they had so cleverly gained.

An Adventure On a Roof.

(By H. Louis Weiser, N. Y.)

It was on a dark night when I and two of my friends went out to look for some fun.

We climbed to the church roof and began jiggling on a part that was flat. Some club was holding a meeting inside and they came and called us down, but we hid so they could not see us.

At last they threatened to send for an officer. It was about time for us to wake up, for the church was all surrounded by members of the club.

"They are going to get an officer to lock us up," said one of my friends to me.

"We must get down then," said I.

"But how?" put in the third. "We are all surrounded."

"Let us go down and surrender," said the first.

"Not much," said I. "I know a pipe where we can climb down around on the north side of the church. I will lead the way."

We all crawled around to where the pipe was and I started to climb down. I got about one-fourth of the way when I heard the pipe crack. I kept still and called for one of the other boys to help me. They both helped me up to the roof again. Then I and one of my friends lost our nerve and went down to surrender. The other stayed up until we were chastised, when he calmly came over and asked us what was the matter.

I will never forget the night of our adventure on the church roof.

Thrown Out.

(By Joseph McClafferty, N. Y.)

One day I was visiting my uncle, who then lived on a farm in the country. I used to spend my vacations there. One fine summer day I and my brother thought we would take a drive, so uncle hitched up one of his horses.

We were going along nicely when all of a sudden the train whistle blew and the horse got scared and ran away.

The wagon was upset and both of us were thrown out. My brother escaped, but I didn't.

My arm was broken in two places, and my face all bruised.

Some men caught the horse about a mile from where we were thrown out.

I did not go out driving alone after that, and when I did go my uncle went.

A Moose Hunt.

(By E. A. Upton, Mass.)

During my last summer vacation I went to Millnocket, Maine, into the woods. There is a large lake near our hut. One day my friend and I carried our canoe to the lake, and also my rifle. We paddled to the head of the lake and landed at a place where the moose, deer and caribou drink. We pulled along silently when I espied a large bull moose. I broke the silence by saying to my friend Roy, "Let us follow that fellow's trail." He said, "All right," so we pulled the canoe under some trees and set out after him. When we had followed him for about a quarter of a mile I saw another great moose feeding. He frightened me at first. He saw us and looked as though he would eat us up. It seemed as

though he knew a couple of boys from a man. Suddenly the old fellow seemed to come to his wits and, with a dash, made for us for all he was worth. My rifle was useless, it being so small. He was nearly upon us when I thought of my father's moose call whistle in my pocket. Quick as a wink, I had it to my lips and gave a side blow on it. The old fellow thinking it was his mate, he turned and ran in the direction he thought the sound came from. Quickly I pushed my friend up a tree and told him to climb for his life. I had just time to get my rifle to my shoulder when the moose came tearing at me, having discovered he was fooled. I pulled at the trigger and down he tumbled with a shot in the leg. I started on the run for the canoe, and Roy was still in the tree, the moose only slightly hurt was up and after me again. But I reached the canoe and tossed my rifle in the bottom of it, and after considerable tugging got it into the water just as Mr. Moose appeared in the path. I paddled for about an hour after the departure with Mr. Moose, and then landed at our hut. They all inquired for Roy, and after I told them what had happened my father took down his Winchester rifle and we paddled back to poor Roy, the moose was tearing the earth under the tree, and Roy was in a half-fainting condition, clinging to the limb. My father, with a true aim, killed the moose, and just in time, for Roy had fainted dead away, lost his balance and held on the limb and fell down headfirst. But my father and I rushed under the tree, caught him as he fell and laid him down gently on the ground till he came to. We took care of the dead moose and started for the hut, both of us boys cured of our desire to hunt alone in future.

Doing the Job Myself.

(By Anthony Askins, Tennessee.)

I was about the age of fifteen, but being rather tall and strong for my age, I have been helping father at the work of well digging and fixing, he being a professional well digger. Well, one day he had a job which he promised to have finished by night, but as he was feeling rather weak and sick I said:

"Father, let me go down and see what's needed."

"All right, son. If you think you can do it, try, and let me know what is the condition of the well below."

Well, I went down and found the walls so decayed that I could almost poke my finger through them and I so reported. Father then ordered new walls, and as the helpers were sending down the wood unluckily for me one load was let down rather carelessly and bumping from side to side it broke the walls and the sides caved in about ten feet above my head, but they met half way and rested against each other.

My life was saved by what I call a miracle.

When I awoke I found myself in bed, with mother bending over me with tears in her eyes. Afterward she told me that it took about four or five hours to get me out of that unexpected grave, and that I was unconscious about five hours more.

I am all right and at the business again, but if that wasn't shaking hands with death I don't know what is.

My Swimming Adventure.

(By Linus Nolan, Rochester.)

A few years ago my friend Bob Adsit and myself were staying in a country place near a small lake. One day we swam out about half a mile and were returning slowly, I a little in the advance of my companion, when of a sudden a gurgling noise and a strange cry caused me to look back, and to my dismay Bob was nowhere in sight.

I turned back glancing sharply on every side for him to rise. A gurgling noise to one side, accompanied the reappearance of the head and face of the poor fellow, his countenance was distorted with agony and it was evident that he was a victim of that dreadful scourge of swimmers—the cramp. I swam toward him and caught him by the hair as he was going down and shouted to him to keep cool and stop trying to swim. But it was too late now, he was no longer responsible for what he did.

The instant I caught him he threw both arms around my neck. I realized my danger and fought with all my strength to free myself, but to no avail, the drowning boy went down

again and this time he took me with him. I tried to keep my head even in that awful moment, and directed my movements toward reaching the surface and succeeded sooner than I expected. I had managed to get his arms from my neck while below; but the fellow seized my left wrist with a grip like a vise, and I could not twist it loose.

Again I called to him to keep cool, but it was useless. He began fighting desperately to seize me, but as a last resort I drew back my clinched fist and let drive straight between his eyes. The blow was delivered with all my strength and did the business. Bob was stunned and instantly became as limp as a rag. Freeing my wrist, I caught him by the hair and holding his head above the water, began swimming toward the shore. Meanwhile a boat had been launched, and we were picked up, and in a few hours we were all right again.

A Wild Plowhorse.

(By Roy Yoho, Pa.)

One day last summer my brother and I were returning from plowing when the horse I was riding scared at something and started to run off.

I had a basket of seeds in one hand and when she started to run I couldn't hold her.

She kept on the road until I had nearly got home and then ran up on a bank about three feet high. She ran for a few feet on top of the bank and then leaped down off it. This nearly threw me off. By this time I had reached home.

The horse turned into the lane, but the gate was closed. She hadn't time to stop and ran into the gate. This threw me onto her back and I didn't have time to leap off of her before she wheeled suddenly and threw me off. My foot caught in the lines and if it hadn't come loose it might have broken my leg when she started up the road. The ground was slippery, and when she whirled around she slipped and fell back right beside me. She leaped up and started to run again and stepped on my ankle and sprained it badly. She ran a short distance and then stopped.

I got off with a badly sprained ankle and a good scare. I think that I was lucky in getting off as easily as I did.

The Rattlesnake.

(By Chas. West, Virginia.)

It was in the middle of June, 1900, when I and some more men went hunting. We hunted all day and didn't kill but three squirrels and five birds.

We were returning under a tree to take a lunch when a sound reached our ears. We looked but could not find anything. We ate our lunch and then proceeded home. Again the sound reached our ears. We took muskets and started to the place where the sound came. We looked under some brush and there we saw a sight to behold.

There lying in the brush was a large, curled-up rattlesnake. When he saw us he stood up on his tail ready to strike. I shot at him, but missed, and brother shot and he missed him.

The snake looked as if he bore a charmed life. He commenced rattling and striking at us. We thought we would have some fun, so we pushed sticks at him, and he made a leap and landed right on my shoulder, and if it hadn't been for Uncle Ned he would have choked me to death.

Of course, I was very scared, but I told them:

"Let's go home."

So we started, and hadn't got far when a whole gang of snakes came running after us. They chased us quite a long distance. We arrived home completely exhausted. Tom said he had enough of snakes, and I did, too.

Between a Bulldog and an Express Train.

(By Owen Adelman, Ohio.)

It was a bright day in the fall of the year of 1901 when I proposed to several other boys to go chestnutting, and as they all thought well of it we got a bunch and started.

We went in the country about five miles and then, after not finding many chestnuts in public places we went to trees

which stood on private grounds. The tree was loaded down with nuts, and when we had our bags nearly full I happened to look around and saw a bulldog coming with the farmer behind.

In a minute we had forgotten all about chestnuts and were running as fast as we could. We soon came near the railroad at a point where it crossed the river, and as the dog was near us, we ran on the trestle.

The dog came after us, but not so fast as before.

When we got to the middle of the bridge we saw an express train coming and got on the other track, only to see a fast freight coming the other way on that track.

On they came!

What could we do?

Were we to get killed?

It really seemed so, but—

"Oh, thank God!" some one said. "Lay flat on your stomach between the tracks." This we did. There was a space of about two and a half feet between the tracks.

The dog stood still, bewildered, not knowing what to do, but it suddenly ran on, only to be killed by the express train.

We lay there motionless nearly frightened to death, while the trains thundered past us. We got up and went straight home, having had enough chestnutting for that day.

A True Story.

(By John H. Jeffreys, Col.)

The accident that I am going to write about happened at Lampasas, a town in Lampasas County, Texas, and in the year 1900. It was one o'clock in the morning that the fire bell began to ring. Everything was excitement and confusion. I didn't know where the fire was, until the fire wagon dashed by.

I then followed after it, about one mile, when I came in sight of the fire.

It was on the railroad near the depot, the through freight had run over a horse, going at the rate of twenty-five or thirty miles an hour, the engine was thrown across the track and two cars of cottonseed were piled on top of it and had caught fire from the engine.

The engineer was thrown from the cab and his right leg was cut off just above his knee. He was thrown some fifteen or twenty yards from the wreck. He died that morning, at five o'clock, while on his way to the hospital. But the greater excitement was in trying to get the fireman from under the wreck. The wreck had caught fire and was so far from the connection that the hose would not reach; but we finally got the fireman from the wreck.

He only lived a few minutes after we got him out. The fire destroyed nine cars, with their freight. That was the only wreck I ever saw, and I don't want to witness another.

Fighting a Rattler.

(By Chas. Franklin, Tennessee.)

It happened while I was staying with my uncle in his beautiful Southern California home, where he spends the cold and the hot months. It is situated in San Diego, which is about 200 miles south of Los Angeles.

As he goes out there twice a year and has no children, he generally takes some one with him, and last winter he took me. While there he took me hunting and fishing, and it was on one of these hunts that the experience that I am about to relate happened.

We started early one morning and reached the low hills, where we were going to hunt the valley quail, in about two hours. We hunted in pairs, there being six in our party.

We were having fine sport when the man who was walking right in front of me suddenly dropped his gun and yelling, "Look out for the snake!" took to his heels. He is to be pardoned for this, as he had just fired his gun and he also had almost stepped on the snake. I looked where he pointed and saw a sight that made my blood run cold.

There right in front of me and coiled to strike was a monster rattlesnake with his rattles going like dry peas in the pod. I pointed my gun at him and just as he jumped I fired both

barrels at his head, blowing it completely off. He had thirteen rattles and a button, and measured five feet ten inches long, and in his stomach was a full-grown rabbit which he had swallowed whole. I have a belt made of his skin, and among some other curios I have are his rattles, of which I am very proud.

In a Landslide.

(By Chester George Schiefer, Ind.)

It was in the summer of 1899 that a few boys and myself were on our way to go fishing in a useless stone quarry of Decatur. As we were passing one of Steel's quarries I went over to the edge of the quarry to look down at the men working, hundreds of feet below.

Just as I got to the edge of the quarry, I started to sink and noticed, to my horror, that the earth under me was caving into the quarry.

I screamed, but I had already started to go down, and my friends could no longer help me. I went down several feet, when suddenly I struck a cable that was used to run a bucket on, to draw broken stone out of the quarry.

I managed to cling to this until one of the quarrymen was drawn up to me in one of the buckets and saved me. It took a long time before I recovered from the fright, but I will never be "nosey" again.

Nearly Beheaded.

(By W. Hull, N. J.)

It was a few days before the Fourth of July, 1899, when I was cutting wood in the cellar of our house with a companion of mine named Harry.

We had a tent and we needed a few stakes, so we went into the cellar to make some. We had a big piece of a railroad tie, and so we decided to make them out of this.

So we each got an ax and were taking a whack out of it one by one for a long time.

When it was Harry's turn to hit it, the log slipped, and went in under his ax to lay it straight.

He had his ax raised and did not see me go in under the log, and brought his ax down on my head.

I lay on the ground unconscious for about an hour, my companion running away, as he was frightened.

When I finally recovered, I screamed for help, and my brother came down and helped me to the hospital.

I was in the hospital for four months, and the doctor said it was a narrow shave. I am well and happy now, for it caused great pain and sorrow for my parents and myself.

A Dangerous Fall.

(By Nickie Kleanch, Minn.)

One day I and two friends went hunting. We had been hunting a while without any luck. I decided to go by myself. I was walking near the edge of the cliff. Suddenly I slipped and fell over. I fell on a ledge and broke my fall. I was a little bruised. After that I did not go so near the edge again.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED
One to each town to ride and exhibit a sample 1902 Bicycle.

1902 Models, \$9 to \$15
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500 Second-hand Wheels
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Worth of Tricks & Make-ups sent postpaid for 25 cents stamps or
10¢ 1 silver. A nice Moustache or full Beard, Trick or Slide Whiskers, any
color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Barnt Cork to blacken
up, Tin, Rubber Mouth, the teeth, coat & apparatus for performing
the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer
is to get your address to send my large list, card of
plays, acts, tricks & acts, latest novelties. Mention paper
you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger
Ring FREE, send size. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.

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true and authentic accounts of the wild career and thrilling adven-
tures of the great plainsman. Street & Smith are the only publish-
ers authorized by Col. Cody himself to publish stories of his life.



Prize Winners in Contest No. 3.

FOR the past three weeks the judges have been carefully reading the contributions entered in the

Buffalo Bill Anecdote Contest No. 3,

which closed May 1st. There have been thousands upon thousands of contestants, and the editors wish to congratulate every boy who entered the contest for the good work he has done.

NAMES OF PRIZE WINNERS.

FIRST PRIZE WINNERS.

William Gander, Matteawan, N. Y.
Grover C. Parker, Milford, Texas.
A. R. Sartwell, Theresa, N. Y.

Each gets a first-class Spalding Catcher's Mitt. Made throughout of a specially tanned and selected buckskin, strong and durable, soft and pliable and extra well padded. Has patent lace back.

SECOND PRIZE WINNERS.

Roy Yoho, Hazel Dell, Pa.
Geo. W. Wall, Buffalo, N. Y.
W. H. Schmidt, Augusta, Ga.

Each receives a Spalding's Infielder's Glove. Made throughout of selected velvet tanned buckskin, lined and correctly padded with finest felt. Highest quality of workmanship throughout.

THIRD PRIZE WINNERS.

J. B. Turner, Bethany, Neb. H. Lewis, Westfield, Mass.
L. Nolan, Rochester, N. Y. Tom Cohen, St. Joseph, Mo.
J. F. Jeffreys, Col., Tex. C. Franklin, Sallater, Tenn.
J. E. Meyers, Phila., Pa. C. G. Schiefer, Ft. Wayne, Ind.
Harold James, Dutton, Ont. Chas. West, Danville, Va.

Each receives an A1 Spalding League Baseball Bat. Made of the very best selected second growth white ash timber, grown on high land. No swamp ash is used in making these bats. Absolutely the best bat made.

FOURTH PRIZE WINNERS.

E. W. Thurmond, W. Va. E. V. Early, Wilmington, N. C.
Billie Windle, Flanagan, Ill. Arthur Swarte, Maunette, Wis.
G. Pearson, Hammond, Ind. Roy Towse, Pittsburg, Pa.
S. Ashcroft, Swedesboro, N. J. Laurence Mehler, Erie, Pa.
W. Kenney, Providence, R. I. R. Byrd, Jacksonville, Fla.

Each receives a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone. Made of fireboard, capable of carrying the sound of a human voice one mile, and in some instances, two miles. More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

Every one of these twenty-six prize winners earned his prize. The contest was close. Many of you who did not win prizes came so near doing it that you are almost sure to win in the next contest you enter.

It's rarely a boy does his best at his first attempt. It's the boy who enters contest after contest who finally wins a prize. Remember that the neatness and appearance of the contributions count.

SEVEN COMPLETE FISHING TACKLE ASSORTMENTS GIVEN AWAY AS PRIZES

Look on the Back Cover of No. 52 to
See What They Are Like.

IF YOU WIN ONE of these famous fishing tackle assortments you will have everything you could possibly need in the way of fishing tackle. You will have such a complete assortment that you will be able to **MAKE MONEY** retailing hooks, lines and sinkers to your comrades who have not been fortunate enough to win prizes. You may become a dealer in fishing tackle if you win one of these prizes, for you will have a complete assortment of over

NINE HUNDRED HOOKS of All Kinds,

ONE HUNDRED LINES, Besides . . .

SINKERS and TROLLING HOOKS. . .

HOW TO WIN A PRIZE.

This new Prize Anecdote Contest is on the lines of the one which has just closed—one of the most successful contests ever inaugurated. Every boy in the country has had some **THRILLING ADVENTURES**. You have had one yourself—perhaps you were held up by robbers, or were nearly run over by a train; perhaps it was a close shave in a burning building, in scaling a precipice, in bear-hunting, or swimming; whatever it was, **WRITE IT UP**. Do it in less than 500 words, and mail it to us with the accompanying coupon.

All entries must be in before September 1. The contest closes on that date.

The Prizes Will Be Awarded to the Seven
Boys Sending in the Best Stories.

Look on the back cover of No. 52 for photograph and description of one of the prizes.

To Become a Contestant for These Prizes cut out the Anecdote Contest Coupon printed herewith, fill it out properly, and send it to **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your anecdote. No anecdote will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY ANECDOTE CONTEST, No. 4.

Name.....
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- 30—Buffalo Bill on the Roost Trail; or, The Redskin Heiress.
- 31—Buffalo Bill's Peril; or, Going It Alone in Dead Man's Gulch.
- 32—Buffalo Bill in Massacre Valley; or, The Search for the Missing Ranger.
- 33—Buffalo Bill in the Hidden Retreat; or, The Captives of Old Bear Claws.
- 34—Buffalo Bill's Disappearance; or, The Stranger Guide of the Rio Grande.
- 35—Buffalo Bill's Mission; or, The Haunt of the Lone Medicine Man.
- 36—Buffalo Bill and the Woman in Black; or, In League with the Toll-Takers.
- 37—Buffalo Bill and the Haunted Ranch; or, The Disappearance of the Ranchman's Daughter.
- 38—Buffalo Bill and the Danite Kidnapers; or, The Green River Massacre.
- 39—Buffalo Bill's Duel; or, Among the Mexican Miners.
- 40—Buffalo Bill and the Prairie Wolves; or, Hunting the Bandits of Boneyard Gulch.
- 41—Buffalo Bill at Painted Rock; or, After the Human Buzzards.
- 42—Buffalo Bill and the Boy Trailer; or, After Kidnappers in Kansas.
- 43—Buffalo Bill in Zigzag Canyon; or, Fighting Red Hugh's Band.
- 44—Buffalo Bill's Red Allies; or, Hand to Hand with the Devil Gang.
- 45—Buffalo Bill in the Bad Lands; or, Trailing the Veiled Squaw.
- 46—Buffalo Bill's Trail of the Ghost Dancers; or, The Sioux Chief's Secret.
- 47—Buffalo Bill's Deadliest Deal; or, The Doomed Desperadoes of Satan's Mine.
- 48—Buffalo Bill's Secret; or, The Trail of a Traitor.
- 49—Buffalo Bill's Phantom Hunt; or, The Gold Guide of Colorado Canyon.
- 50—Buffalo Bill's Brother in Buckskin; or, The Redskin Lariat Rangers.
- 51—Buffalo Bill's Trail of the Man Tigers; or, The Doom of the Branded Hand.
- 52—Buffalo Bill's Boy Pard; or, Training the Buckskin Boy.

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